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In A New World

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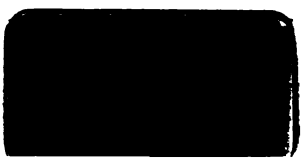

# CHRISTIANITY IN A NEW WORLD

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# PREFATORY NOTE

OF the peculiar responsibility that the Christian Church faces in these days of readjustment and reconstruction, the Baptists of the Northern States have their full share. These responsibilities are indeed emphasized, if not increased, by the changes which we have recently made in our organization, and as a result of which we enter into closer co-operation than before in the accomplishment of our denominational task.

It was with these things in mind that this volume of essays and addresses was planned and undertaken. Loving our denomination and earnestly desiring that it shall do its full duty in this hour of peril-fraught opportunity, we offer this volume to our brethren in the hope that, in some small measure at least, it may contribute to that knowledge of the history of our religion and that apprehension of its essential elements which are needed to enable us to interpret this time and serve our generation as our fathers served theirs.

Most of the chapters of this book were written especially for publication in it. The few which were originally delivered as public addresses, though bearing the marks of their special occasion, have lost none of their significance by the lapse of time since their delivery.

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# I

# RELIGION THE BASIS OF LIFE

REV. CHARLES W. GILKEY
Pastor of the Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago

# RELIGION THE BASIS OF LIFE

FOR a long time now we have been hearing a very great deal from pew, pulpit, and press alike about the urgent need of making religion more "practical." The demand that it be very definitely and closely related to the needs and problems of every-day life has been so overwhelming that every phase of religious thought and activity has been powerfully affected by it. Sermons on Sunday and exhortations in the midweek meeting have alike literally clattered with the construction of practical applications. Devotional literature has developed a new form whose distinctive characteristic is the relating of Scripture, meditation, and prayer to "daily needs" and "every-day life." And this same strong tendency has appeared in the theory as well as in the practise of religion. However much they may differ in detail, a considerable number of present-day theological thinkers have been explaining the nature of religion very largely, if not wholly, in terms of its practical values.

In all this we can of course see a return to the plain emphasis of the New Testament. The Christian religion, whose Founder declared, "By their fruits shall ye know them," and whose great missionary apostle laid such stress on "the fruits of the Spirit," can be true to itself only as it maintains these practical tests of its authority and validity, and proves by such concrete evidences its superiority, not only on the foreign field over other

forms of religious faith, but also here at home over the lack of any religious faith at all. The secret of its victory over rivals abroad and scepticism at home has always been, and must always be, in its ability, as James put it, to show its faith by its works.

This practical emphasis in religion is not only distinctly Christian, but very characteristically modern, and very strikingly American. It comes as a natural reaction after the long reign of dogmatic theology with its emphasis on orthodoxy of opinion, and as a needed balance to the fervor of evangelicalism with its premium on emotional experience. And we Americans, who pride ourselves on being above all things else a "practical" people, have stretched this emphasis to its farthest notch of extension and intensity. With our comparative indifference to the intellectual problems of religion and its relation to the world of thought, we have given ourselves whole-heartedly to the more congenial practical tasks of religion, and its application to the personal and more especially to the social needs which make the most obvious and pressing problem of our modern time.

Still another factor has contributed to this same emphasis. As every one knows, the last generation has seen a marked and rapid transition in everything that has to do with religion. In no similar period in human history, perhaps, has the world with which religion has to do altered so fast, or have religious ideas and religious practises themselves undergone so large a transformation. In such a time of transition the constant and urgent need is that of bringing and keeping religious phraseology, experiences, and institutions, up to

the living present, and relating them closely to the actual conditions in which men are living. Our modern American emphasis on "practical" religion is our natural response to this obvious need. The instinctive popular remedy for a religion that is in danger of getting out-of-date, is just this prescription of practicality; and though it has to be combined with certain other more fundamental courses of treatment, both theological and social, before a complete recovery of up-to-dateness can be achieved, there is no doubt that in itself it "availeth much." At any rate, in these days it is being generally and vigorously tried.

Now the natural tendency of all such wide-spread and spontaneous movements, as is well known, is to swing to an extreme. Containing within themselves large elements of truth and value which are indispensable, as this one certainly does, they tend to take up one-sided positions from which certain aspects of the whole truth are beautifully plain, but other equally valid aspects hardly visible at all. Then sooner or later comes the inevitable reaction; and the pendulum swings back past the balanced center toward the other pole which had previously been exaggerated and recently neglected. Often it is only a later generation that can fairly appraise the elements of truth and value on both sides, and take its final position at a point whence the whole is visible in true perspective.

There are not wanting signs that something like this is happening, or is going to happen, with our modern emphasis on "practical" religion. Its thoroughly Christian core remains eternally valid; and its needful place in a time of transition like ours is plain to see. But as always, it is easy to exaggerate

these undoubted elements of value, and especially to overlook certain aspects of the whole truth which these contemporary emphases tend to obscure. The result in religious life is the neglect or depreciation of those more contemplative and devotional ranges of religious experience which it is so easy for the modern man to undervalue. In religious thinking the natural outcome tends to be a theory of the nature of religion which, however valuable for its light and power on the ethical problems of human social organization, fails to do justice either to the historical significance or the personal value of religion in its full-orbed comprehensiveness.

Signs of a reaction from such overemphasized practicality are already appearing among some of the leaders in American religious life and work. In a very recent series of Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale, under the very up-to-date title "In an Age of Social Rebuilding," Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, of New York, one of the most distinguished of American preachers, has this to say to students for the ministry with regard to the past and present shortcomings and future tasks of the church:

> Nor is it that they (the churches) are not sufficiently "practical" (to employ a sorely overworked word). American preaching is not lacking in definite applications. If anything, our churches are too "practical," making religion something useful, rather than something fertile; something to be immediately done, rather than the establishment of a relation with the Unseen out of which many things will spontaneously come.

The same deep and significant note which thus finds clear expression in the counsel of an active minister of religion to those who are to be the future leaders of the church, appears still more

sharply in one of the most thoughtful and stimulating of recent studies in the nature of religion, "The Meaning of God in Human Experience," by Professor W. E. Hocking, of Harvard, one of the leaders of the younger generation of American philosophers:

From the side of its deeds in history religion remains a mystery. Its career is the swath of an agency immense, invisible, paradoxical. If its works are patent, they no more reveal its character than they becloud it. But the surface of historic fact which yields so little to an external inspection and use may respond more quickly to a simple hypothesis. What I have to propose is indeed something less than a theory at first, a rather unpromising tool, a figure of speech both commonplace and faulty. It is this. The effect of religion in history appears most comprehensible to me when I regard it not primarily as an actor but as a *parent*, a parent whose deeds are far less important than her progeny, and whose most notable activity is put forth only in course of her dealings with them. The distinction between utility and fertility runs throughout nature. It is a distinction which amounts to an incompatibility at some points in vital economy; it seems necessary that at these points life must choose between the useful and the fertile, so that the secret of the survival of many an apparently idle organ or social member is caught only in the rare moments of its creative action. It is, vaguely, the distinction between worker and queen, leaf and blossom, male and female, science and fine art. Utility belongs to the middle things in creation, fertility to the extremes—the ugly, the rejected, the consummate, the perfect—to those things whereunto creation runs as to hopeless failure or to final achievement; and both the apparent failure and the apparent finality are denied in the moment when they become fertile. If the function of religion in the world should prove to be of the fertile rather than of the useful sort, the curiously paradoxical character of its overt deeds is in some measure accounted for.

But it is not the preacher and the philosopher alone who are realizing that religion, truly as it in-

sists on practical application, does not exhaust or entirely fulfil itself in these concrete consequences. Some of the most significant developments of modern religious life appear on closer study to be instinctive popular recognitions of this same truth. Along with the practical tendency in modern religion has gone at the same time a marked development of the esthetic, symbolic, and ceremonial elements in religious worship. This tendency toward a richer form and order of service has been apparent among almost all religious bodies. This can hardly be because of any large difference in ethical or social consequences between a more informal and a more dignified type of religious exercise; it is rather because the latter satisfies certain deep esthetic and emotional needs which are relatively independent of practical results, but profoundly involved in religious experience.

This has been notably evident since the war. While the religious effects of the last five years in the life of mankind have been quite too complex to be entered all on one side of the account, and it is probably too early as yet to strike a very accurate balance in summing them up, this much is certainly true: Under the stress and strain of warfare many men and women have broken through to a new level of religious experience, which has expressed itself, not only or even chiefly in practical activity, but in a new consciousness of God issuing in a new life of prayer, in a facing of the fact of death which has led to a new and living faith in immortality, and in a sense of the mystery of life and the potency of evil which has brought about a new faith in God and a new expectancy of his purpose and power in human life and history. While these

deeper phases of religious experience are of course related to and productive of very definite actions, they are much more than mere imperatives for conduct. They are assurances about the Unseen and Eternal, on the strength of which a man can not only work, but rest; which offer him, not only a Great Ally for cooperation, but a Great Companion for personal fellowship; which give him, not only a cause to work for, but a faith to die by.

This brings us to the heart of the whole matter. There are two conceptions of religion abroad in our time, neither of which is false, but one of which is deeper and truer than the other, including all that the latter has of truth, but setting that truth in larger perspective and adding to it other elements of truth which give it a broader and surer foundation. The more popular but less profound is that whose sole test of religious truth or value is the word "practical" very concretely and somewhat narrowly interpreted; whose analogies tend naturally to be taken from the mechanical world, since in our modern age it is machinery that most men instinctively think of as "practical"; whose constant imperative is the exhortation to "do" something, no matter how galvanic the action may prove to be; and whose chief assurance is the promise of present joy and possible achievement to those who thus "do their bit." The possible dangers of this view of religion appear at once, even under the mechanical analogy, when we remember what must happen to an engine whose tasks are indefinitely multiplied without increasing its boiler capacity, or to a water system whose outlets are increased while its reservoir is depleted and its springs run low.

The profounder view of religion, which includes

all the truth of the other, we may call the vital, or as Doctor Coffin and Professor Hocking call it, the fertile. It is significant that when both Jesus and Paul would emphasize the practical tests of religion, they do it under a figure that belongs not to the mechanical, but to the living world—the figure of "fruits." Trees are known by their fruits, as Jesus said, and Christians by their conduct. But trees supply shade to rest in as well as food to work on; beauty of form to delight, and coolness to invigorate as well; and as modern botany has taught us, they absorb and transform through their foliage the carbon dioxide which would otherwise accumulate until it poisoned the air we breathed. Above all, they reproduce and multiply themselves by processes more complex and extraordinary than any of these. What is true of trees is even more true of animals and men; all living beings possess a variety of functions and capacities, no one of which exhausts its value or significance. So of religion—which is above all things *living*. It produces actions indeed, and mightily; but no less does it supply and satisfy needs more personal and capacities less strenuous, while it neutralizes poisons deadly to the soul. Above all, it is, like all living things, *fertile*, as Doctor Coffin and Professor Hocking suggest; establishing, in the former's fine phrase already quoted, a "a relationship with the Unseen, out of which many things will spontaneously come."

In other words, religion is the basis of life at its broadest and deepest, supplying a sure foundation not only for immediate action, but for high thinking, for personal communion with God, and for quietness and confidence here and hereafter. It is the heart of life at its best and its most, whence

proceed all its issues for thought and feeling as well as for conduct. As some one has put it, "religion is not so much a way of looking at certain things, as a certain way of looking at all things"; and out of this peculiar inner attitude grow spontaneously its natural fruits in mind and will, in conduct and character.

This fundamental view of religion will help us, both as individuals and as a generation, to develop certain of these natural fruits which our time greatly needs, but which are not always easily produced by any direct exhortation. One of these is largeness of outlook. Mme. Breshkovsky, known to all Americans as "the little mother of the Russian Revolution," has this to say of us as a people:

> I see America a great plain, and all the people running about as little children—little children without a teacher. You have nowhere a great leader. Everybody is bright and intelligent, but no big brain. In America there is too much specialism—too many people expert in one line, not enough who know many things. Your writers are too narrow. Write books that millions will read, but write about important things.

Now it is exactly this comprehensiveness of view which religion, looking as it seeks to do at the whole of life from God's point of view, gives to men. But when men are living in "a great plain," either literally or spiritually, it avails very little to exhort them directly to widen their horizon and take in new interests and responsibilities; the chances are that they can already see most of what is visible from that particular spot. But if they can once be carried or climb to some mountaintop of vision, from which other classes and other nations will be clearly visible and other areas of life become real,

then some of their provinciality and pettiness may disappear, and everything, from their international relations and social problems to their philosophy of life, will benefit thereby. It is religion that takes men to such mountaintops, not so much by an exhortation addressed to them, as by an experience worked in them. And of such an experience largeness of outlook is a natural fruit.

This is equally true of that inner renewal and reenforcement which has always been one of the great achievements of religion in the human soul, and which Professor Hocking has so vividly described in his volume already quoted. When men have used up their patience and courage in the daily routine or under the sudden tragedies of life, a blunt exhortation to " buck up " or " hang on " may bring some spasmodic response; but only that profounder experience of inner regeneration which religion alone knows how to produce, can avail to " put new heart into them " so that they shall indeed " run, and not be weary, and walk, and not faint."

Still more does this hold of one of the fruits of religion which is likely to be greatly in demand in the difficult days just before us—creative faith. It is plain to all thoughtful men that instead of ushering in the millennium as we sometimes vainly hoped, the end of the war has brought a period of conflict and confusion and rapid transition, in which it is evidently going to be very hard for both men and nations to keep their heads and their bearings, and to build a new order of things wisely and steadily amid the clamor and controversy that are everywhere in evidence. It will be easy for us all to lose both head and heart, to grow cynical and pessimistic. It can avail but little in such a situation

to exhort men to "keep going," or even to "trust in God," when they have no basis in personal experience for such a faith. The surest spring of that creative faith which combines activity with expediency, and makes men sure that they are fellow workers with God in building a new world more nearly according to his purposes, is the constant consciousness of his leadership and power that prompted the great saying of William Carey: "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God."

For in the last analysis, faith in God is not man's spasmodic effort in answer to another man's direct exhortation; it is man's spontaneous response to God's own self-disclosure. Our Christian experience is that God has so clearly revealed his own spirit and purposes, his own love and power, in Jesus Christ, that as we follow him we find that faith springing up within us, and bearing fruit of itself, we know not how. Possibly one reason why a living faith in God is no stronger and more general in our modern age, is because we have been trying to produce it directly by exhortation or argument, instead of by bringing men into the presence of Christ, where it grows spontaneously and brings forth its own varied and beneficent fruits. After all, the growth of any friendship, human or divine, is not so much an achievement produced by direct action, as an experience wrought in us through deepening acquaintance by the mutual revelation of character, purpose, and personality; but this friendship produces then the most concrete and valuable results in action. Just so, the secure confidence in God for time and eternity which utters itself in the Twenty-third Psalm

or in the closing verses of the eighth chapter of Romans, is the spontaneous answer of the Christian heart to the love of God which, as Paul beautifully puts it, has shined for us in the face of Jesus Christ. And then that faith will in turn, as Jesus said, be known by its very practical fruits in the lives of those who possess it.

# II

# THE UNSHAKEN CHRIST

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# THE UNSHAKEN CHRIST[1]

WE are to think this morning about the spiritual leadership of Christ, emerging unshaken out of the catastrophe through which we have been living. Our text might well be the entire Epistle to the Hebrews, for the background of that epistle, like the background of our generation, was an earthquake. Everything shakable was being shaken. To be sure, the Roman Empire had unified the world, but it was a tumultuous kind of unity. The Empire had broken down the boundary-lines that had separated people from people and had kept their pet provincialisms from disturbing contacts. It had poured all religions and philosophies into one melting-pot. The minds of men were in turmoil. Then, as now, old patriotisms, old politics, old religions, old philosophies were staggering together on a quaking earth.

In particular the Jews were dizzy with the swift and terrible events that had befallen them. In 70 A. D. Jerusalem had fallen before the Romans. The dearest affections of the Hebrew heart had twined about the Temple. The Temple gone! The most beautiful meanings of the Hebrew worship had been pictured in the sacrifices upon Zion. The altars gone! The priesthood had been the venerable medium for the confession of national sins and for the bestowal of God's returning pardon. The priest-

[1] The sermon preached at the hour of worship of the Northern Baptist Convention, in Denver, Colorado, May 25, 1919.

hood gone! Everywhere, as one reads this letter, he sees that upheaval in the background. He feels as one felt walking through the ruined streets of a French village, surrounded on every side by the wreckage of things that had gone all to pieces. And at the heart of this letter is a verse that might have been written yesterday: "That which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away."

### The Letter a Message to Us

A man who in a time like that can write a letter that has been worth preserving all these centuries must have a message for us. Here is one who, like ourselves, lived in a day of tumultuous unsettlement, and who knew how to face it. He took advantage of a time when everything else was being shaken to find out what it was that nothing could shake. He used the earthquake to distinguish between the solid and the insecure, the substantial and the flimsy, the abiding and the transient. His first quotation from the Old Testament runs like this: "The heavens are the works of thy fingers; they shall perish, but thou continuest; they all shall wax old as doth a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Everywhere we see his swift and sensitive fingers trying to lay hold upon things that are secure. When he talks about his hope, it is an "anchor, sure and stedfast." When he talks about his Lord, He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." When he tries to interpret his times, he says, "The removing of things that are shaken, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain." And there is one verse that might be our text, in particular: We

have a kingdom—"a kingdom that cannot be shaken."

Is there any better use that we could make of the great catastrophe through which we have been living than thus to find the unshakable amid the shaken? In fair weather you cannot be quite sure what is stedfast and what is insecure. Often they look much alike. Jesus noted that in his parable about two houses built, one on rock and one on sand. In pleasant weather, covered with vine and very similar, the casual observer would have found it difficult to distinguish between them. But the day of storm, that was the day of judgment, too. The rains descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon those houses, and then the most careless observer could discern which was the solid and which the insecure. Surely the rains have descended, the floods have come, and the winds have blown on us. Our experience, from one point of view, is indeed only the accentuation of the ordinary change and mutability in human life—but the accentuation has been terrific. It has been as though a breeze that used to blow a few dead leaves away had during the last few years become a hurricane that ripped great branches off and threatened to uproot the forest. How shall a man handle himself in such a shaken time? Get your eyes on the unshakable—whatever else, that first! Oh, Seer of an ancient time, what was it that you saw emerging, stedfast, out of the tumult of your day?

## Christ's Spiritual Leadership

There is no doubt as to the answer which this ancient seer would give. He would say: *The spiritual leadership of Jesus Christ.* One almost fears

that words grown so familiar may not at the first hearing stir our pulses to a quicker beat. But if we could clear away the clutter which so often has obscured them, if we could make them shine, luminous with their native simplicity, it would stir our pulses to a quicker beat to see how, amid this terrific modern cataclysm, the spiritual leadership of Jesus stands once more unshaken.

On New Year's Day I picked up a secular magazine and I read this editorial:

> Hitherto we have accepted for the events of the last year the standard of the statesman, the publicist, the politician. Now they have passed on for final review at the judgment-seat of Jesus of Nazareth. These terms sound antiquated and theological, but they are deliberately chosen because they describe the fact. Our great adventure of the past year, its outcome, our motives and methods and expectations, must finally be submitted to the verdict of Jesus and meet the measure of his gospel.

When secular editors write like that, a Christian man way well take time to state plainly, for himself and for his friends, what it means, that the spiritual leadership of Jesus emerges unshaken from this war.

### Our Superficial Optimism Shaken

As one turns to think of those things that have been shaken by the war, how can he avoid putting his finger at once upon our superficial optimism? We were so happy about the world before the war. We were so confident that humanity was on an upward course and would continue without hindrance on that smooth ascent. Mankind has not always felt that way about the race. Men used to think the world was getting worse, drifting down from

a gold age to a silver, and from a silver to a bronze, and from a bronze to an iron. Or they thought that the world was static, mankind circling around vast circumferences without betterment. And then began that series of great events which had so predisposed our modern minds to easy-going optimism. For one thing, the discovery of America that opened new continents to exploration and lifted the horizon of human expectation as to what we might expect upon this planet before we were through. For another thing, the discovery of new truth, as when Copernicus lifted the roof off the world and introduced to us a universe of immeasurable distances. For another thing, the coming of democracy that broke the old tyrannies and put into the hands of the people such prodigious power that we are not ready to set boundaries to what society may achieve. For another thing, applied science, progressively mastering steam and electricity, until for years now we have been wondering what strange new power might be within our grasp before the morrow. And behind all these the evolutionary idea that no longer saw the earth nailed together like a box, but growing like a tree and from living roots putting out ever-new branches and new leaves.

Now the focal result of all these great events and ideas is here: that we have awakened in us a very happy expectancy about the future, a glad and easy-going optimism about what humanity would do upon the earth. Perhaps we were not so solicitous as our fathers were about heaven, but to see America five hundred years from now, that would be exciting. And in the meantime humanity was upon an escalator going up. To be sure, if in addition to the lift of the machinery we should run, we

might speed up the pace of progress, but run or not, willy nilly, humanity was upon an escalator going up.

Then upon this whole fool's paradise the war broke, the most cruel and brutal war in human history. Just what did we mean—going up? It has been said that at the beginning of Noah's flood there were some "don't worry" people who remarked that it was not going to be much of a shower. But it was. It was terrific. Nobody would have dared guess what a flood it was going to be. So this war swept over us. Hideous facts laid hold upon the foundations of our hope and shook them. The fountains of the great deep broke up beneath us. There were some of us who discovered how those Philistines must have felt when that blind giant of a Samson wound his arms about the sustaining pillars of their pleasure hall and leaned against them until they fell.

Who is going to be our spiritual master in a time like this? No chatter merchant with "don't-worry" nuggets can supply our need. Some One who has gone down into a human hell and has emerged, triumphant—no one less: "tempted in all points like as we are," as this letter to the Hebrews says.

There have been times during this war when the sin, the imbecility, the malignity of man have seemed disease incurable. How could we believe in God and man and the kingdom? Consider Jesus then! Nobody ever had such cause to despair of human kind as he. He never had anything save love for man, a love so deep and beautiful that in our fairest imagination of the love of God we never can overpass the vast circumferences within which

the compassions of the Master moved. And yet his family thought him crazy, his church thought him a heretic and excommunicated him, his nation thought him a traitor and crucified him, his friends thought him a failure and disowned him. One of those is enough. To have your family think you crazy—that's enough. To have the church that you were brought up in and that you love, disown you as a heretic—that's enough. To have your country that your heart broods over, as his did, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" cry "Crucify him" against you —that's enough. To have your friends think you a failure and disown you—enough! But to have all four in the brief span of one short lifetime— Oh, too much! Yet so bitterly mistreated by men, suffering every cruelty that man can put on man, from neglect and scorn to the public brutality of crucifixion, what is it that this Jesus has been doing for us all these centuries, until his very Name is the symbol of it? Making us believe in man! Making us believe in a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth! Making us believe in a God who loves us, every one! Burning into the human heart the fairest hopes and faiths that the human heart has ever dared to entertain, until his Cross has ceased to be the badge of tragedy and has become the center of our most exultant song! Through hell to spiritual triumph, that gives him his right to speak to us.

### The World Monstrously Wrong

Many men have reached the place where they will not listen to light-hearted chatterers talk about Christian faiths and hopes. They cannot tolerate hearing some Pippa singing "God's in his heaven;

all's right with the world." All is *not* right with the world. The world is monstrously wrong. I, for one, will not live any longer in a fool's paradise, repeating sweet nothings about everything coming out well. I cannot nourish my soul on these embroidered war mottoes about "Build a little hedge of trust around today." But in the midst of this indignant protest against the easy-going optimism of prosperous people I hear a great voice lifted out of an ancient time: "Woe unto you, Chorazin; woe unto you, Bethsaida—more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." Why, here is some one who does not look with easy-going optimism upon human nature. "Woe unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, who rob widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers." Why, here is Some One who does not blind his eyes to the deep-seated malignity of human life. "My God—my God—why hast thou forsaken me?" Why, here is Some One who has gone down into the abyss himself. When he speaks I must listen to him.

My friend tells me of a visit to a ruined Belgian town. Everything was in ruins. As he walked through the wrecked streets he saw only one thing left standing, one of the rear pillars of the chancel of a little village church. And on that pillar was one word from an old Latin inscription that used to be there: *Fides*—Faith. Only one kind of faith really matters to the thoughtful man today, the faith that has been through the fire like that and still is standing. Such is the faith of the Master. He has a right to speak to us. One who can go down into the pit of human perdition as he did, and can come up again with faith unspoiled in God

and man and the kingdom, has a right to be our Master. He has the keys of a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

### Religious Institutions Shaken

As one considers the things that have been shaken in this war he surely must include our religious institutions. How very similar our problem is to the problem which the writer of this letter faced! With him it was the Temple and the sacrifices that were gone, the old Mosaic law code and the Sabbath that were shaken. Upon those things, as on trellises, the dearest affections of the Hebrew heart from childhood had been taught to twine. They loved the temple and its ritual, the sacrifices and their meaning, the Mosaic law code and its venerable history. At first they tried to be both Hebrews and Christians, but day by day they saw dimly, what with appalling clearness became evident when Jerusalem fell, that at whatever cost they must rip their tendrils off those Jewish trellises and teach them to twine about new forms and institutions.

Anybody, however, who ever tried to do a thing like that knows how perilous and difficult it is. When a man has been brought up in a certain set of religious ideas, made beautiful in ritual and set in a venerable institution, some of the choicest affections of the heart entwine themselves about every nook of the creed, and every cranny of the ritual. And when an earthquake shakes them, what spiritual havoc is wrought! So this letter was written to steady people at a time when religious institutions were being shaken, and this is the message of it: *Jesus Christ has not gone to pieces. Institutions change. He fails not.* Read the letter and

watch him turn the truth around as though he brought a diamond, facet by facet, to the light. Temple gone? What was there in the temple that is not consummated in Christ? Sacrifices gone? What was there in the sacrifices that does not come to its fulfilment in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus? Was he not substance for which all the rest was shadow—fulfilment of which all the rest was preparation? That is to say, in a time like ours when religious institutions were being shaken, here is a man trying to lead people back to the spiritual life from which all institutions come, which all institutions were meant to serve, and which can cast off old institutions and put on new ones as a man changes his garments.

Is there anything that we need much more to learn today than that? For our religious institutions are perilously shaken. There is just one thing of which a man can be sure concerning them. They cannot go on as they are.

Here in this great assemblage, as befits our freedom and democracy, we have represented many diverse opinions. But no one could have lived with us during these last few days without seeing that with one accord we have our faces to the front. We see what new, tremendous tasks await the churches, and we are endeavoring to adapt our organizations to meet them. We see that just as surely as in the first century the new wine of the gospel could not be poured into the old wine-skins, so now the purpose of the Living God in this twentieth century never can find adequate expression through the uncooperating forces of a divided Protestantism. If in that first century God lifted his people up out of old institutions, saying, " A new day in the Roman

Empire not contemplated in your early orders! Behold, I show you new ways of working for a new day!" how shall he not in this generation expect of us such things as cooperation instead of division, and forms of organization somewhat adequate to meet the gigantic problems which Christianity must face in this new time?

All this, however, means change. Multitudes are dizzy amid the shaken institutions of religion, and some will lose their heads; but some will find the hidden Christ and a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

I draw two pictures for you. First, a home in the old days when Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were living patriarchs. A strange background lies behind that domestic establishment—the desert setting, the flapping tent, the open fire, the waiting camels, the rough altar of unhewn stone! I draw you a second picture: a home in Denver, very complicated—furnace, electric lights, telephones, food on the table from the ends of the earth, and magazines with news from pole to pole. See in what sharp contrast these two pictures stand! Nothing in common! Listen: "And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, and Isaac took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her." Nothing in common? Oh, everything in common that matters most! For household arrangements change, but love abides. Don't try to keep religious institutions from changing. They will change. Stay in them and help them to change right. But keep your soul steady. For life in Christ, like love, changes its outward circumstances as trees change leaves, but life and love are the same yesterday, today, and forever—a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

### Narrow Nationalisms Shaken

In the third place our narrow nationalisms have been shaken, and the resultant problem makes luminous the necessity of Christ to the world. The school board of Lancaster, Ohio, in 1828, passed this resolution:

> You are welcome to use the schoolhouse to debate all proper questions in, but such things as railroads and telegraphs are impossible and rank infidelity. There is nothing in the word of God about them. If God had designed that his intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam, he would clearly have foretold it through his holy prophets. It is a device of Satan to lead immortal souls down to hell.

With what mystified bewilderment does a man look back upon such a world! Standing there in Lancaster, Ohio, in 1828, he sees what has been the builder of our modern life. Steamships and railroads and telegraphs and telephones have contracted the planet until it is smaller than the thirteen colonies once were, and it still is shrinking. A few years ago a great increase in Sicilian immigration was noted at the Port of New York, and an investigation was set on foot to find the reason. What do you suppose was the explanation? The invention of the refrigerator-car! When the refrigerator-car was invented, fruit from Florida and Southern California became available for New York markets. So the fruit industry of Sicily that had largely depended upon American commerce dwindled, and Sicilians, thrown out of work, began emigrating to America.

The whole world is thus bound up into one economic, nervous system. Touch it anywhere—you

feel it everywhere. It is because of that that so many of us listen with surprised apprehension to those who in America are still talking about the possibility of crawling back into our narrow shell of nationalism. What—try that game of isolation and neutrality again, as though we were not sufficiently ashamed of our late experiment? America with a League of Nations or without one never can be neutral and isolated again in the face of any major world affair, and the reason for that is something that no one of us, nor all of us put together, is strong enough to alter, or impede, or stop. It is science warring on distance. As though distance were the chief enemy of the race, science makes war upon it; yesterday telephones; tomorrow airplanes across the sea. And above the heads of those gentlemen in Paris imposing terms on Germany stand those forces whose decisions really master humanity upon the earth—science imposing terms of unconditional surrender upon distance. So our narrow nationalism has gone to pieces, and the world must be rebuilt on broader bases.

Now some are saying that these new international relationships will be the saving of us. But every point of contact newly made has become a possible point of conflict. A few years ago there was but one place where nations could clash—on their borders. Now they can clash in the antipodes, in the trade routes and markets of the world. Shameful things we have had to look upon during these years. Tribes on the west coast of Africa, where Christian missionaries have for years been successfully at work, having no quarrel between them, all at peace, are armed by Christian Allies upon the one side and by Christian Germany on the other, and those two

groups are hurled at each other in a war concerning whose cause or issue they have neither responsibility nor care. Saved by these international contacts! They have almost ruined us, and as the meaning of this war grows manifest—as though a great mountain long shrouded in the clouds now showed its outline through dissolving mists—this truth grows clear, that unless these multiplied contacts of our strange new world can be made fraternal, unless they can be baptized with the Spirit of Jesus, we are undone.

The world is a wreck. How often men say that! They are right. It is a wreck. The question is, What kind of wreck? Near my summer home in Maine there is a hull cast up by the sea, and year after year it is beaten more to bits by the relentless action of the storm. Is the world that kind of wreck? Or may the springtime give us the true analogy in its bursting buds? They are wrecks. They have gone all to pieces. Why? Because the summer is coming—because life is welling up from the bosom of creation, because the old was not adequate to contain the pulsing life that springs up rich from the roots of things. May it be that the world is that kind of wreck—the wreck of a bursting bud, with the promise of summer in it? Then it is only so because there are capacities by God's grace in human hearts to respond to Christ and all that he represents. Without that there is no hope.

### The League of Nations

Some one may be saying, We will get the League of Nations and that will solve our problem. You can easily imagine what I think about the League of Nations. With all the lamentable compromises

in the covenant, it is the bravest step toward international fraternity that mankind has ever dared to take. We must back it up. But do you really suppose that any political mechanism, however necessary or wise, can solve the problem of mankind? If in an inland village the water by its contamination should make people ill, would the city fathers better conditions or solve the problem by sitting in long consideration on it, with the conclusion that they must have a new pump. Let the new pump come, but if the water which that new pump draws, the more copiously just because it is new, be the same contaminated stuff whose poison hitherto has made the people ill, what advantage shall the village have? So the League of Nations is a new pump. God grant that we may get it, but if out of the deep wells of the human heart there be no better water to draw than the old pumps have been drawing—bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, with all malice—where is salvation there? No political machine can save mankind. The soul of all reformation is still the reformation of soul. When the last economic readjustment has been made the inner problem still remains. Oh, Church of Christ, as much needed in this generation with all its social nostrums as ever in mankind's history, arouse yourself! The spiritual fountains in the human heart must be set running with purer waters, or we are a wreck indeed.

### Material Civilization Has Been Shaken

Finally, one thing certainly has been shaken, our material civilization. We were so confident about it before the storm broke. We were sure of the incalculable benefit which our progressive

mastery of the latent resources of the universe was going to bring to man; we were proud of this new world of ours with its piled stone, its sturdy steel, its harnessed steam, its blazing electricity. Like Nebuchadnezzar over against Babylon, we cried before it, "Behold, this city which my hands have builded." Does anybody wish to talk like that now? Steel—wonderful! Yes, but it can make bayonets to kill men by thousands and long-range guns to fire on defenseless cities seventy miles away. Electricity—marvelous! Yes, but it can charge the stockade wires around a fearfully mistreated Belgium and can keep the refugees from escaping their perdition. Applied science—wonderful! Yes, but it can make poison gas to slay men with their own breath, and airplanes and submarines and tanks to do things hideous beyond the wildest imagination of old believers in devil's miracles. Modern transportation—splendid! Yes, but it can take youths from Vladivostok and Tasmania to die together in the same pool of blood on a French battle-field. Modern finance—wonderful! To be sure, but it enables a nation to pledge the credit of their children and of their children's children in waging a war to the point of exhaustion and extermination. This material civilization is not all clear gain. It may turn out to be a Frankenstein, a mechanical automaton which our hands have made and which now will turn and rend us. There is just one hope. Have we enough moral idealism, have we enough spiritual power, have we enough faith in God, have we enough of those things which Jesus Christ stands for, so that we can handle this power for good and not for evil? One problem upon earth today, like a hub, holds the spokes of every other

problem—power, magnificent power, coming into the hands of men. Who is going to handle it? Pagan ill-will or Christian good-will—which? Heaven or hell upon this earth hangs on the answer.

Surely ill-will has had its innings. Is there any cruel abomination that man could do to man that ill-will has not suggested these last years? Some of you remember Calais in the days of peace—the beautiful sea, the long silver beach, the Casino rocking with merry laughter. Wordsworth walked there with a little child upon the sands and wrote about it:

> Thou dwellest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
> And worshipest at the temple's inmost shrine,
> God being with thee when we know not.

I saw Calais a few months ago—the sea covered with camouflaged ships and torpedo-boat destroyers hunting submarines; the silver beach along which Wordsworth walked covered with Chinese coolies piling the sand into bags for building the parapets of trenches; the Casino a hospital filled with the shattered frames of wounded men, the windows on one side broken where five great German bombs a few nights before had fallen in a vain endeavor to slay the sick within. Ill-will has had its innings. On French battle-fields they are still seeking for bits of uniform or for insignia that may establish the identity of men blown to bits so that their remnants even have not been found, and fathers and mothers wander among the white crosses, seeking for the places where the bodies of their sons may lie. Streets are filled with wounded men, and behind closed doors are those others, so hideously ruined that human eyes must never look on them again. Ill-will has had its innings.

## Christ the Hope of the World

And a few months ago we were tempted to think that ill-will might win the day. Backed by that tremendous mass of men and machinery crashing through sometimes ten miles a day, it looked as though the German General Staff was right. They seemed to be invincible. How weak moral ideals looked! How flimsy Jesus, saying, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!" But now the Kaiser is gone. Now Ludendorf has quit, the submarines ignominiously have surrendered, the great sea fleet has been given up, the shock troops have failed, the enemy legions draw back across the Rhine, and as that high tide of ill-will ebbs, see how the tired heart of humanity comes back again to hopes of a better world, to ideals of a more decent and Christian earth for God to rear his children in. Did we think those ideals were weak? They are the only adamant things on earth; they alone outlast the catastrophes and outwear the decay of generations. Like fresh springs beside the sea, the salt tides flow over them again and again, but ever they rise up refreshed in beauty and power.

If you doubt it, look at history. Take Israel—its furious wars, its mad diplomacy, its busy market-places. All gone! What's left? The Ten Commandments are left: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," that is left. The Sermon on the Mount, that's left. *The spiritual residuum is left.* Take Greece—its mighty wars, its teeming market-places. All gone! What's left? Homer is left, and Æschylus, and Plato, and far above them all that man they killed, Socrates. The spiritual residuum is left. Corinth used to be the busiest city of the

ancient world. We have heard of Corinth. Why? Because once a spiritual genius visited it and wrote a letter with a passage in it that begins, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Our own Civil War is long finished. I have read in a letter written in 1861 this sentence, "I hope to wade knee-deep through Southern blood." That is gone! What is left? Lincoln's left. "With malice toward none, with charity for all," that is left. In Newark, New Jersey, there is a statue of Lincoln in one of the squares, and several months ago a Russian peasant was seen standing before it holding his little girl by the hand. She evidently had just come from an American school, and she was telling her father in their native dialect about Lincoln, about who he was, about what he did, about what he said, and how he died. And of a sudden the suffusion of a great emotion came over the Russian peasant's face, and he lifted his little girl up in his knotted hands and at his behest she printed a kiss on the bronze cheek of Lincoln. He is left.

That editorial with which we started was not talking piety; it was talking history.

In the last analysis everything does move out to take its stand before the judgment-seat of Jesus and to meet the measure of his gospel. Still his standards rise unshaken. It would be a great conclusion for this war if some of us should find him. Superficial optimisms, shaken! Religious institutions, shaken! Narrow nationalisms, shaken! Material civilization, shaken!

> Change and decay in all around I see—
> O thou who changest not, abide with me.

# III

# THE PLACE OF TRADITION IN MODERN CHRISTIANITY

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# THE PLACE OF TRADITION IN MODERN CHRISTIANITY

THE word tradition may convey one of three meanings. In ecclesiastical theology it means that body of doctrine and discipline believed to have been revealed by God and handed down to successive generations orally, and not incorporated in the Scriptures. This narrow use of the word occurs most frequently in controversies between Catholic and Protestant concerning the idea of authority in the church and for the church.

In the science of history the word tradition is used to describe oral sources of information, in contradistinction to written. Before the origin of writing, tradition was the main source from which each succeeding generation learned the opinions, the doctrines, the practises, and the customs of its immediate predecessor and of the more remote past. When written memorials began they did little more than stereotype tradition. They simply aided the memory and under certain conditions displaced it as the depository of the past. Writing of itself does not guarantee the truthfulness or accuracy of what is written, but fastens tradition in time and place and so makes it capable of more exact observation and investigation. Tradition is somewhat of the nature of a moving picture; a document is by contrast a photograph. Both have values, each of its own kind, determined by its own nature. Both must be judicially examined to

ascertain what values are worth transmitting to posterity.

In some of the social sciences tradition is a comprehensive term to describe the sum total of all material, both oral and written, that shapes present-day thought and action. It is the process by which the accumulated experiences and achievements of human society in literature, in the fine arts, in science, in philosophy, in civil government, and in religion, are passed on from generation to generation. Tradition is the giving over of the past to the future by the present. Hence, each generation is the heir of all preceding ones, and passes on its inheritance, both of good and of ill, deposited in both written and unwritten tradition. The heir receives. He can do nothing else at first. He must use his inheritance as best he can. By acquired experience he learns to discriminate values; discards, if possible, what he finds unsuitable; and, if possible, by creative genius adds to the wealth inherited some treasures hitherto unknown. Evidently, the third meaning of the word tradition includes the other two, and is socially the most significant. For modern Christianity is the social heir of all preceding generations of Christianity, including Catholics and Protestants, so that traditions that belong theoretically only to Catholics shape the thoughts and sentiments and practises of Protestants also.

But another distinction must be made. Hitherto, the word tradition has been used to describe the process of delivering from one to another. It means also the thing delivered, the traditions of the elders transmitted to pupils for their guidance in thought and conduct. But one generation is not exactly like its predecessor in doctrine, or ceremony, or cus-

tom. In the process of delivery the thing delivered has been modified. Yet doctrines and ceremonies are singularly alike in the same civilization for centuries. The ideas handed over tend to persist, and also tend to vary. It is in this conception of tradition that the question is pertinent, "What is the value of tradition in modern Christianity?"

It is as useless to quarrel with tradition, conceived both as social process and social product, as it is to quarrel with the earth on which we live. Both are facts to be reckoned with in our will to live. Neither is to be accepted with permanent credulity. Both are a challenge to the intellect and to the will. Both are designed by the gracious Father for the well-being of his children, if they know how to use them. In their learning how to conquer the earth and tradition, he has provided for their continuous progress in every phase of human activity. Tradition is the social heredity that guarantees fixity. It is tradition that stabilizes emotions and in due time creates permanent sentiments; it is tradition that, in given environments, unites families into clans, clans into tribes, and tribes into larger units so as to differentiate civilizations, as in India, China, or Europe; it is tradition, slowly forming during the recent centuries, that will ultimately break down barriers that isolate larger units of civilization, and convert a League of Nations into the brotherhood of man. In short, it is tradition that guarantees the continuity of human history.

The fact of heredity in biology discloses a tendency to permanence and a tendency to variation. The offspring is like the parent, and yet not altogether like. The slight differences may be intensi-

fied and perpetuated and "breed true." The results have been marvelous within recent years both in plant and animal life.

Tradition exhibits a similar biological process. The Buddhism of Burma, for example, has a continuity of existence that shows its descent from the Indian teacher; it has differences, in their origin indeed slight, but gradually accentuated through the centuries, so that it "breeds true" in Burma, and we have the Buddhism of Burma, as distinguished from the Buddhism of Ceylon, or of Tibet, or of Japan. In this sense all religions are handed over from father to son by tradition. The son can no more escape tradition than he can escape the physiological characteristics of the father. In a Buddhist environment he will grow up a Buddhist. By imitation of parents' worship in the home and in the temple, by learning the sacred scriptures, by singing hymns of praise, by reflective thought finding expression in creed and ritual, by the powerful forces of tradition the Burman boy is Buddhist.

The certainty was secured by an early requirement of Indian Buddhism that any one joining the Sangha, or Order, or Congregation, should say:

> I go for refuge to the Buddha.
> I go for refuge to the Law.
> I go for refuge to the Order.

Person, law (teachings), order (church, organized adherents) have been the stiffening and perpetuating factors in every founded or ethical religion, Christianity included. The variations within each, due to varying interpretations put upon the person, the teaching, and the order, have been insignificant, compared with the tradition that has

preserved their distinctness through the millenniums. Greek Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism in all its forms, with their many and wide divergences, have a common tradition that constitutes them Christianity, as distinguished from Confucianism, or Hinduism, or Mohammedanism, or Judaism. The conserving factors that bind all Christian bodies into historical continuity are the idea of a body of doctrine, the idea of discipleship, or group of adherents, or the church. The factors that make for diversity or variety within Christianity are personal reactions, however occasioned, in reflection upon the molding ideas and ideals. But the varieties within Christianity have been made permanent, so that sects have bred true and produced denominations by the same factors that have made Christianity itself permanent, namely, an originating person, a creed, a worshiping group. That is, creed-making, in some form, inheres in the nature of human progress, in its endeavor to rationalize habits of thought and of conduct. Creeds are simply the way-marks of man's advance in reflective thought. Hence, every well-developed art, or science, or philosophy, or organization has its creed. For the purpose of this paper, the creedal element in tradition will be used to illustrate the value and use of tradition in modern Christianity.

1. *Value of creeds.* Creeds serve as shells or husks to protect and preserve the kernel of the fruit in order to secure subsequent fruit. Dogma protects and perpetuates the truth expressed in it. The creedal statement is related to the idea embodied in it as the body to the spirit. They are separable in thought, but inseparable in fact.

Again, creeds preserve past experiences in order to conserve the creative experiences that produced them. They keep alive the quickening emotions and the reflective thoughts of men of past generations. Hence, they have didactic value in the society that cherishes them. They furnish educational material to reproduce in the present creative spirits who may do for the future what our predecessors did for us.

Again, creeds are the outgrowth of the human impulse to rationalize conduct. They make customary actions true to the intellect. In this way they supply aid to lift conduct out of the realm of unreflective impulse. They supply intelligible motives to stimulate the will and to evoke affections. Thus religion as life is conditioned for its perpetuity and extension on creedal statement and external worship. For external worship is only creed visualized.

2. *Defects of creeds.* In fruit the husk is most obvious to the senses. Kinds of nuts are known by the appearance of the shells. It is easy, therefore, to identify the shell with the fruit—with the kernel that alone has the promise of new fruit. Experience and reflection are needed to teach that it is the contained idea that germinates, and bursts the shell.

Again, while it is true that formulative creed is the outcome of reflective thought, reflective thought is not identical with the soul's reactions that precede and necessitate it. Religious life bears other fruits than logical deductions; and logical formulæ do not necessarily affect for good the emotions and the will. There is a great difference between the moods of mind that occasion the affirmations, "I

believe *in*" and "I believe something *about*." The former conditions a volitional venture that makes self a fresh center of moral activity; the latter asserts an intellectual self-satisfaction that may have no creative power whatever.

Again, to formulate a creed is to assert the primacy of intellective interests. This makes a derived authority primary. It is to substitute the defense of the faith for the experiences that elicited the defense. This results in making creeds a final and infallible authority, just because they are so highly valued as instruments. Creeds have real and undeniable authority in life, but the reality of creedal authority must be distinguished from and subordinate to the reality of that authority that makes creedal statement possible. In history the final authority is God; and in history, creed is only one of the modes by which he discloses the nature of his own authority. But in history, the mode of disclosure through creeds is conditioned by relativity in the time and place of disclosure. Accordingly, all creeds are not equally valuable; nor can religious creeds stand in isolation from the scientific, political, social, ethical, and philosophic beliefs that environ them.

3. *How to use tradition.* Today in all branches of Christianity, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Protestantism in all its forms, among both clergy and laity, there is a quiet, resolute, and reverent spirit of personal independence in estimating the relative values and defects of inherited beliefs and practises. This is as it should be. The heirs make an inventory of their inheritance, in order to determine relative values. They know the past too well to be content to be fettered by it. They pay

becoming respect to the dead that accumulated the wealth, but they do not take them into full partnership in creating new wealth for the future. Loyalty to the future is as imperative as loyalty to the past. It is the children of today that build the world's tomorrow; and if the world today is to be better than yesterday, we must make it so. If our children inherit a better world than we did, we must contribute new values. To do this requires critical judgment of the past and of the present, and the possession of an ideal. With reference to the past, it is our obligation to heed Christ's principle to bring forth out of our treasures new things and old; with reference to the future it is our duty to be guided by Paul's ideal, "Let all things be done to upbuilding." God's gifts are for edification. He works toward intelligible ends. Utility and decorum must prescribe the legitimate exercise of critical judgment of tradition, in order to build up the body of Christ, the church.

(1) *The Christian Ideal.* The Christian ideal today has come down to us from the New Testament. That is, the ideal is traditional. It is for us to study the New Testament; to ascertain the varying ideals expressed; to discriminate between the ideals; to estimate their relative worth in a developing moral order; to note in history how some ideals have been outgrown, because overshadowed by more comprehensive and more morally impelling ones; and today to herald those that the world needs for its regeneration. That is, the vitality and regenerative power of Christianity depend upon criticism of its alleged realities. The Christian religion was founded in critical judgment. Faith conceived as simple acceptance of facts and ideas presented

had no place in Christian origins. Jesus was accepted as the Messiah on the basis of intellectual discrimination. Disciples became attached to him because of appreciated values. The values were deemed of such worth that disciples *willed* to go to death on account of them. Conviction, acknowledgment, and trust are the elements of our Christian faith. There is no place in our modern Christianity, wherever influenced by centuries of Baptist teaching, for simple acceptance of what has been handed down.

The modern world asks, Is it true to the early Christian ideal of Christ? He was appreciated by those who came to know him best for his power to enable them to live clean wholesome lives, to produce fruits of the Spirit. For this reason they called him Jesus. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he it is that shall save his people from their sins."

The uniqueness of Christianity is the uniqueness of the moral excellence of its adherents. Only those that care enough about righteousness to know the lack of it the deepest want, and the attainment of it the highest satisfaction, can think of Jesus of Nazareth as his earliest followers came to think of him. They sang praises to him as to God, because he and none else had given peace that passes understanding, and had granted eternal life. What a testimony to the moral worth of the early preachers of Jesus, that they thought his saviorhood consisted in saving from sin, its power now and its consequences today and in the unknown tomorrow! "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open its seals; because thou wast slain, and didst redeem to God by the blood out of every tribe, and tongue,

and people, and nation; and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they will reign on the earth." "He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still."

Loyalty to the moral issues involved in Christianity is all-inclusive. All subordinate loyalties must resolutely be kept subordinate, and be made to contribute to the supreme loyalty.

(2) *Some Christian instruments in tradition.* Organization, creed, and ritual stimulate conduct, beget affection, and evoke loyalty. In the process of history, loyalty to instruments that have been used in the endeavor to make the ideal actual has, in too many instances, been substituted for loyalty to the ideal itself. Hence, every generation has the duty to evaluate its traditional instruments afresh, in order to recreate the moral energy of the generation that originated them. A traditional organization and a traditional rite will illustrate how these may now be used by the Christian interpreter to secure the Christian ideal.

The New Testament valuation of the church is familiar. It was a company of those who were being saved from sin. It had an origin, a character, a function, and a destiny wholly unlike any other group of persons known in the Græco-Roman world. To it was entrusted a message wholly new —a message of righteousness from God by faith in the crucified and ascended Christ—a message of divine power and of divine wisdom. It was "the church of God," "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood." "Christ also loved

the church, and gave himself for it." "It is the pillar and stay of the truth." Its members in relation to God are called "sons"; in relation to Christ, "members"; in relation to each other, "brethren"; in relation to those outside the group, "holy." No New Testament writer makes any depreciating remark concerning the church.

Today depreciation of the church is almost a mania. It is reflected in books, in periodicals, in the daily press, in conversation—even in Christian pulpits. Many are seriously asking, "What is the matter with the church?" Seriously they attempt an answer. Are the modern diagnosticians talking about the same thing as the New Testament writers? Were the New Testament Christians thinking about what we today popularly call churches? Present-day valuations concern groups bound together by historical associations, by ceremonies, by creedal statements, by theories of organization. New Testament valuations did not concern a building, nor a liturgical service, nor a denomination, but a company of people, however small, or however large, held together by experience of a new kind of righteousness and by incentives to a new quality of service. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love."

Can the church today silence merited criticisms and regain the New Testament valuation? It can, but only on condition that the church today subordinates its loyalty to divisive ideas and practises to loyalty to its Head. "And he is the head of the body, the church." The uniqueness of the church, the body of Christ, is the uniqueness of the Head himself.

In popular physiology, the head, the brain, is the seat of purpose, of emotion, of volition; the body is the executive instrument of the head. Christ is doing his work in the world through the church. Our ascended Lord invisible in the heavens is made a visible and permanent fact in history through his visible church. His life, his teachings, his death must be duplicated in his body, otherwise it misrepresents to the world him who became incarnate for its salvation.

In communicating its benefits to those outside, the method of the church is persuasion—the method of Christ. He simply invited followers; they chose to follow. After they became disciples, he granted them the liberty of learning. If they remained, it was because they found values in him that they had not found elsewhere. Likewise, the church invites. The value it offers it offers to free acceptance. The acceptance must ever remain free. Over the entrance of every Christian church is written, "Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When entrance has been gained, the burdened find no authority save the authority of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. In the freedom of this authority he feels at home in any social environment, under any and every form of government, holding any philosophical theory that rationalizes to him the facts he has discovered. The only restraints he discovers are those that separate him from evil companionships; and to make the separation assured, he continues fellowship with those who, like himself, are keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

The word church in Christian tradition is a priceless treasure-chest from which the Christian

preacher today may draw new treasures to store up for tomorrow. It is his privilege to put a new wealth of meaning into the word, forming a richer tradition for the Christian education of generations to come.

The church has inherited certain appointed forms of worship. Some of these have contributed to spiritual values; others have made worship formal and therefore irksome. Formalism is not congenial to Christianity. Any Christian group advertises its formalism when it attracts attention more for its scrupulous observance of a rite than for its peculiar moral power and evangelistic enthusiasm. The cure is, either to omit the rite, or to give it significance that appeals to the reason and to the conscience. If the latter alternative be accepted, reason and conscience may lead to acceptance of the former also, until such time as personal conviction demands the rite as a voluntary confession of spiritual experience.

The rite of baptism is an illustration. Baptism has been perpetuated in the church since the earliest Christian years. Its mode and purpose have varied through the centuries. The origin and occasion of the variations are well known. These are traditional in each denomination. With Baptists the traditional mode is immersion. They have not always given the same reason for the mode preferred. But the rite and the doctrine of the rite ought to be related, as gesture to speech. Each complements the other; each without the other is unintelligible; both express identical truths. Both teach truths that have the same moral ends as the church that practises the rite and teaches the doctrine. For a religious organization to discontinue baptism be-

cause of tendencies to formalism and legalism, may avoid these particular vices, but may deprive some member of the organization of the value that comes from public confession through a rite. The ethical value of a ceremony cannot be secured by refusing to share in its observance. In the social order the ceremonial element in our tradition has tremendous conserving power; and, in so far, refusal to perpetuate by performing rites is refusal to conserve. The real question, then, is not, Shall modern Christianity give up baptism? but, Will modern Christianity practise the mode that is best fitted to express its fundamental convictions, and permit believers to request it as a means of confession rather than submit to it because imperatively imposed? If the latter position be accepted, the value of the ceremony has all the value Baptists may claim for it, and its continuance is guaranteed because of the nature of social organization.

In "The Ethical Record," March, 1903, these words may be found:

> Please do not forget . . . that it is necessary to express ideals in order to give them force and efficacy; that ideals which merely slumber, which remain inchoate in the mind, which are merely felt, not expressed, are apt to become faint and inefficacious, and religious forms and ceremonies are to be based—if you will admit that they are to be continued in any form—upon this need of expressing what otherwise would remain unexpressed. . . I think we ought to have something that takes the place of baptism. Of course the sacramental view, the idea that the word spoken is the channel of an influx from above, or that the drops of water can wipe away original sin, and all that, is out of my mind entirely, but I do think that the great occasions of life should be ethically pointed, should be spiritually accentuated on the ground that things need to be expressed and fitly expressed.

It is too late in the history of the church to give up baptism, when for the conservation of moral values Societies of Ethical Culture feel the need of a rite analogous to it, if not identical with it.

"The great occasions of life should be ethically pointed." Can there be a greater occasion than the day a man views his life in the light of God's purposes in Christ? He repents, he abandons his past. He sees the old buried; he sees the new emerge and ascend to the right hand of God. These are at first only mental reactions in view of what the penitent knows of the character and purpose of Christ in history. It is necessary to express ideals in order to give them force and efficacy. Hence, it does not shock the moral sense to read: "For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is the confession that puts the penitent among those that have had "the great occasions of life." It separates him from old loyalties; it commits him to decisive words in favor of the lordship of Christ over his future—his future in this world and in the world to come.

"Things need to be expressed, and fitly expressed." "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But the language of symbolism is as normal and universal as the language of the lips. Rites and ceremonies are natural human means of expressing emotions and ideas. The symbolic confession may be more significant for the social group than the verbal, for the former focalizes past and future in one moment of personal history, and so furnishes a dramatic experience that in subsequent years is available for memory and imagination to use for constantly purifying effects. Earliest Chris-

tian teachers made use of the symbolic confession of baptism to urge the baptized to noble living. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Continuous reckoning that the penitent is dead and alive in the same relations that Christ died and lives has beneficent effects in the formation of character. The imagination that enables him frequently to recall "the great occasion" of his burial in baptism, must make him as frequently as serious and as joyous as on that first day, when by symbolic confession he declared his death to sin and ascension to newness of life. Thus viewed, baptism cannot be affirmed to be a mere form, handed down by social heredity, and which may, therefore, for ethical reasons be abandoned; but it can have real sanctifying value in Christian life. It may help the believer work out his own salvation; and in this sense, it may have a morally saving efficacy.

Suppose the Christian church of the second and subsequent centuries had consistently and persistently taught the New Testament conception of baptism, would not the Christian church of today have a more commanding authority over the consciences of men? It is the high privilege of Christian teaching today to engraft into tradition social and ethical reasons for baptism, and thereby regain the power of this rite as an instrument for moral amendment. Are our candidates for baptism as well informed on the objective conditions of salvation as were those whom Paul had in mind when he asked, "Are ye ignorant, that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death"? After our penitents have been baptized, do we often enough aid them to call to mind that ini-

tial confession in which they died and rose again, and thus stimulate in them the sanctifying power of frequent imaginative reenactment of a personal spiritual experience, and of its historic origin in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? God in his good providence has given to modern Christianity values enough in tradition, in spite of its defects, to reconstitute it on the basis of the ideal of its earliest adherents, if we know how to use it wisely. And "if any one is lacking in wisdom, let him ask from God, who gives to all simply and upbraids not, and it will be given him."

# IV

# THE LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

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# THE LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

THERE are two sharply antagonistic conceptions of life which are now and long have been in favor among people equally religious and equally zealous. The one conceives of God chiefly as a great lawgiver, and of right living as consisting in keeping rules. Its tendency is to lose sight of people and to concentrate thought and effort on pleasing God and achieving good for one's self by so doing. It is apt to talk about merit and being saved.

The other way of thinking is more aware of people, and conceives of God as the great Father who is concerned for his people's welfare, and of right living as consisting very largely in doing what is for the happiness and well-being of people. Its tendency is to forget self in doing one's task in the world, as our soldier boys in France did.

The first seems, on the surface at least, to be more religious and more moral than the other. The second is sometimes characterized by the advocates of the first as being scarcely more than humanitarianism. But only in its extreme form does the first reduce religion to religious observances, or the second concern itself wholly with conduct toward men. Among Christians, at least, the difference has usually been one of relative emphasis rather than of exclusion of one point of view by the other.

Both these conceptions had their exponents among the Hebrews of the Old Testament period. The one

finds expression in the utterance of Deuteronomy associated with the Decalogue, "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those that hate me." The other is the thought of most of the prophets and finds beautiful expression in the words of Micah, "And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Doubtless both these conceptions had their representatives in the Judaism of Jesus' day. But apparently among the more eminent representatives of the religion of that day the worship of God was emphasized rather than the service of mankind. Be that as it may, the Gospels leave no room for doubt on which side Jesus stood. Eminently religious himself, believing with all his heart in God, whom he loved and reverenced as Father, he nevertheless put the emphasis of his teaching and conduct on doing good to men. It seems clear that his conception of God, his character and power, were such that he believed that God could not desire for himself anything that men could do for him so much as he desired that they should live in love and mutual helpfulness one with another. Certain it is that he saw no value to God in a religion that put worship of him over right relations to men. "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar," i. e., art about to engage in an act of worship of God, "and dost there remember that thy brother has ground of complaint against thee for having wronged him in some way, leave there thy gift before the altar, go first and be reconciled to thy brother, then come back, and go on with the offer-

ing of thy gift to God." For worship pure and simple Jesus recognized a place in life, but not as interfering with or even delaying social righteousness.

Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath is very illuminating respecting his scale of values. Whatever the original intent of the Sabbath legislation, it had come to be in Jesus' day simply legislation, to be obeyed as such and with the utmost compunction. To Jesus the whole practise was repulsive because under its influence men supposed that they were achieving merit with God by acts that were more or less cruel to their fellow men. There was apparently nothing of the iconoclast in Jesus. We never find him going out of his way to offend the scruples of the people. But neither would he allow their Sabbath scruple to stand in the way of his doing good to men. Falling in with sick people on the Sabbath day, he did not tell them to come back and see him the next day, but healed them then and there. But perhaps the most instructive of the Sabbath incidents is the plucking of grain on the Sabbath. For in this case the human distress which he regarded as sufficient reason for disregarding the Sabbath was nothing more keen or serious than the hunger of a healthy man for his Sabbath morning breakfast. The satisfaction of plain common hunger was to Jesus a more sacred duty than the keeping of the Sabbath, whose observance as a holy day was specifically commanded in the Old Testament statutes and enforced by Old Testament prophets.

The passage is notable also for its extraordinarily clear and succinct statement of the principle underlying his attitude: "The Sabbath was made for

man, not man for the Sabbath." This does not indeed say that man is more than God or than God's law. But it does say that in the judgment of Jesus the welfare of men, and that too their common physical comfort, is more sacred than a religious statute, however ancient and solemnly sanctioned. Remembering Jesus' undoubted supreme regard for God's will, we are led to conclude that to him it was impossible that any statute, however ancient or sacred, could really express God's will for men, if it did not make for men's welfare.

Now this is a very far-reaching principle, but it is also one that Jesus undoubtedly accepted in its full length and breadth. It is not that he abolished the Sabbath. What he did was far more significant than the repealing of any statute could be. In that he discovered the will of God not by reference to tradition or statute, but by unhampered inquiry as to what was good for men he cut the ground from under all statutes as such by announcing a principle that supersedes them all. To him people were so supremely valuable, their welfare so supremely important, he loved them so much, and so believed in God's love for them, that he could not believe that God would be pleased with observing ancient customs or old statutes the practical effect of which was to make men go hungry and sick, or to compel them to bother about fasts and distinctions between foods that did them no real good. It is not that Jesus exalted humanitarianism above the will of God, but that he interpreted the mind of God and discovered the will of God by his own attitude toward people.

Jesus certainly believed in religion. The first great commandment, he said, was to "love God

with all the might, mind, and strength." Yet the second was like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And when we read these sentences in the light of Jesus' whole life conduct, it becomes evident not that he put religion first and morality second, or morality first and religion second, but that he blended them in one. In fact he anticipated modern sociology in the discovery that there is no such thing as an isolated individual, that this is fundamentally a social world; but he also believed what modern socialists have not always believed, that man's community includes himself, his fellow men, and God, and that the secret of well-being in that community and for the individual is that the latter shall recognize the worth of all elements of the community. This means that toward God, as the supremely wise and good Member of the community, men shall cherish a love which, just because God is supremely wise and good, must, in its elements of reverence and faith at least, surpass the love of man for man; but that the latter love differs from the former not fundamentally, but only as the persons toward whom it is directed are different, containing less of the element of adoration, but more of the desire to serve, because service is more needed. The world is a community, Jesus would say, if he were using the language of a modern classroom, and it is an ideal community when every member centers his thought not on himself or his own well-being, not on God as if he were the only other, not on men as if there were no God, but when he recognizes the worth of all, himself included, and seeks the happiness of all, believing that God being good desires not worship at the expense of service of men, but worship of him in the service of men,

and a faith which is at once the counterpart and the support of love to one's fellow men.

Such a view of life puts all the past at our service and conserves all the good that is in it; but it leaves no room for enslavement to it, for it opens wide the door to the discovery of all the good that is hidden in the bosom of the future as fast as the eyes of our experience are open to discern it.

Between this attitude of Jesus and that of Paul there is a profoundly interesting parallel as well as some striking minor differences. We do not know of any time in Jesus' life when he was a legalistic Pharisee. For all we know his insight into life and truth came so early and so naturally that though he grew in wisdom as in stature, he never had to reject any view he had previously held. Not so with Paul. If he was born free politically he was not so religiously. The freedom of his later years he purchased at a great price. Accepting the current legalistic Pharisaism, he had become a zealot in the practise and defense of it. His conversion to Christianity meant a new view, not of Jesus only, but of conduct also. According to his own testimony, with the vision of Christ in which he saw him as Son of God and image of God, was associated a death to law through law. How long he took to think his way out from these fundamentals to his full gospel is not so important as that, when he arrived at his conclusion, it was substantially identical with the position which the synoptic Gospels represent Jesus to have held. Yet it seems to have been achieved by Paul not through testimony concerning the teaching of Jesus, but in the laboratory of his own experience.

Consider a single incident of Paul's experience as

illustrating his position on this matter, the controversy with Peter at Antioch. At Jerusalem Paul had defended the right of the Gentile to full standing in the Christian community and a full share in the Christian salvation without being circumcised and solely on ground of his faith in Jesus. Other questions which this one might naturally have raised were apparently allowed to remain in the background unanswered and even unasked. But when Peter came to Antioch and found there a Christian church which not only contained uncircumcised Gentiles, but in which Jews and Gentiles ate together at Gentile tables, these sleeping dogs roused from their slumber. At first Peter, charmed by this picture of Christian unity and fellowship, joined in the meals at which food forbidden by the Jewish law was, or at least might be, offered. But when certain of the Pharisaic party in the Jerusalem church came to Antioch and reproached him, through fear of them, he revised his practise and adopted a course which Paul characterized as an attempt to compel the Gentiles to conform to the Jewish law. The meaning of this is obviously that after the coming of the men from Jerusalem Peter refused to eat Gentile food, but let it be understood that table fellowship could be resumed on the basis of the Gentiles consenting to observe the Jewish law. Against this proposal Paul entered a fervent protest, accusing Peter of hypocrisy and inconsistency, and in effect going so far beyond the Jerusalem agreement as to insist not only that Gentiles need not keep the law of foods, but that Jews must not do so under circumstances which made their observance of the law an attempt to coerce the action of the Gentiles.

That Paul went the full length of his logic, and maintained that Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, however their action might in certain matters be in accordance with the law, were not called upon to control their action by law as such is clear from several considerations. In the first place, he follows the narrative of the incident at Antioch by a statement of his view in general terms, and in this statement speaks no longer of any specific statutes, but of law in general, and applies his reasoning not to Gentiles, as if their situation were peculiar, but to himself and Peter, both of them Jews. But perhaps the most striking evidence of the thoroughgoing character of his reasoning is the way in which he answers the question of the Corinthians about fornication. It is evident either that, when Paul was among them, he had been so imprudent as to state his anti-legalism in the phrase, " All things are lawful," or that what he had said had been perverted into that form. In either case this phrase had been ascribed to him and employed in defense of the practise of fornication. This being brought to Paul's attention, he accepts the challenge, will not retract or repudiate the statement, but while condemning impurity in the most uncompromising way bases his condemnation of it not on the Old Testament prohibition, but on the ground that the fellowship with a harlot which fornication involves destroys one's fellowship with Christ.

But if Paul goes to such a length as this, what basis has he for morality, and what relation has it to religion? The answer is clear. By faith in Jesus one comes into vital fellowship with the Son of God, who is the image of God. By such faith moreover one acquires the moral attitude of Jesus toward his

fellow men, and his conduct comes under the domination of love. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith, faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." "In Christ Jesus neither keeping of statutes counts for anything nor disregard of them, but faith which finds expression in love." Thus does Paul eliminate the statutory and the physical both from his religion and his morals, and make them both spiritual and vitally related to one another. Like Jesus he might have said, I do not destroy law, I fulfil it. For he insisted on the highest morality and condemned all lawlessness in the sense of disregard either of the well-being of one's fellows or of the civil law. But he did all in the name of love.

Certain physical rites he seems to have found useful aids to the spiritual life. But his all-but-constant insistence is on the things that are spiritual only, uncontrolled by statute, and touching the physical only, as the spiritual must always find expression in the outer and visible.

It has been much disputed whether the apostle did not ascribe spiritual power to baptism and the Lord's Supper, and whether there is not in his valuation of them an ascription of authority to statutes and of value to physical things. I do not think he did. But if he did it is perfectly clear that in so doing he was inconsistent with the fundamental assertions of his faith, and the logic of his life. Perhaps we cannot insist that Paul was so perfectly clear-minded that he could never accept anything that was not a part of a logically coherent system. But if so we cannot fail to see what was his real and deepest thought, and what the flaw in the other-

wise clear glass of his mental outlook. As valuable aids to the development of the Christian life, Paul could without inconsistency make use of both baptism and the Lord's Supper. As spiritually effective by virtue of their physical qualities, or as statutes to be observed regardless of their value to the spiritual life of the community, they contradict the otherwise clearly expressed and fundamental elements of his thought.

But more important than the consistency of Paul with himself is the question of the soundness of his thinking and the applicability of that thinking to subsequent ages of the church. Did Jesus and Paul emancipate the men of their day from Jewish legalism, to replace it by better statutes, but still statutes to be legally observed? Or did they open the door into a freedom which is the birthright of the sons of God? Did they believe that the Spirit of God now and then comes into humanity to set up a legalism confessedly imperfect because subsequently displaced, but yet binding till it is displaced in the same way that it was set up? Or did they believe and are we to believe in an ever-present Spirit and presence of God, which entering the life of every generation, in so far as that generation will receive him, leads ever on in the unfolding life of the race? In other words, is religion made and remade at stated intervals by an occasionally visiting power of God, or is religion always in the making under the guidance of the eternal and ever-present Spirit? Did Jesus revise statutes and set up a new legalism, or did he, in word and deed, in life and death, reveal, with a clearness never equalled, the true principle of human life, the heart of religion and morality?

These are questions of great importance in this

day. If we have any doubt about them we may gain some light on them by a fresh study of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, and that of Paul in his epistles. Is it possible that in reference to them all denominations of the Christian church are still lagging far behind Jesus and his great apostle? Is Christianity a new—now of course an old—legalism? Is it not rather the liberty of the children of God—liberty to follow on in the footsteps of the Son of God and under the ever-present leadership of the ever-living Spirit of God?

# V

# THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE IN A TIME OF RECONSTRUCTION

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# THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE IN A TIME OF RECONSTRUCTION[1]

NONE of us has ever been able to escape the relentless working of the law that if we keep up the struggle long enough we become like that which we fight. At the time we are making conquest of the other side, the enemy may register the real triumph if he sees we have adopted his spirit and are employing his methods. It makes no difference to him if the methods are camouflaged to suit our personal equation. Many a controversy has degenerated into the electric leap of the positive pole of one man's hate to the negative pole of another man's sullenness. The persecutor may see himself in the man whom he has hounded and who in his turn has become a persecutor. It has been the fate of many a martyr to be known as a hunter of the souls of men.

The social applications of this law at the present time make a long and melancholy list. Holy Russia fought czarism for a century and paid for her freedom the most awful price known in the history of nations. But czarism lives again in bolshevism, which is only czarism upside down. The same spirit, the same methods, the same hates live on: all that has been changed is the objects and the party cries. Labor today meets the tyranny of capital with an even greater absolutism and intolerance. Partyism steals the clothes of the other side when it is in

[1] An address delivered on Wednesday, June 23, 1920, at the Northern Baptist Convention, in Buffalo, N. Y.

swimming. The methods of two political units today are indistinguishable: they have the same psychology, the same strategy, and at last the same hunger for dominance. In the intimate realm of the spirit the law works as universally. The martyr churches read the older communions out of the kingdom of heaven, while the new order organizes itself in military fashion against the old leaders. Theology has fought science with little discrimination; and science, now that her day has come, seems to have learned little from her own struggles. In too many cases, from places of authority in school and society, she exacts the price of her own wounds in a narrowness and intolerance which theology seldom showed. It is only by the working of the larger law of grace and love that we have ever escaped becoming like that which we have fought.

As a people Baptists have gone through this danger zone more than once. It cannot be said that they have always had grace enough to pass through it unscathed. In fact, some of them have not recognized the danger zone at all; some simple souls have even thought they were on enchanted ground when they were privileged to use the weapons of the other side. There are some among us who have succumbed to the other side because of illusions. One of the most common is that Baptists are at the present time a martyr church, and that the greater part among us are suffering from social disabilities on that account. To live on the martyr reputation of our denomination is to invite Carlyle's blast of reality, "Let us clear our minds of cant." When we as a body of people have grown to have as actual members or adherents one-fifth of the entire nation, the claim of the martyr church must

be snuffed out by ridicule. Facts do not make the claim real. It is a pathetic fallacy of history. A people that have the most ambitious program in evangelical Christianity and resources that they have scarcely touched have the look of men in their eyes: they have forgotten all about the knout and the prison.

We will not get past the danger zone of the law of which I have been speaking until we find ourselves in terms of our essential principle which distinguishes us from other communions of faith. There is today very little that distinguishes us from the other denominations. Nine-tenths of what we sometimes loosely call our principles are just as precious to others who profess the evangelical faith. It is likely that at one time we as a people stressed them in a peculiar and needed way; but the service we have rendered in those so-called principles is over—they are the common property of all the churches of Christ. We may congratulate ourselves that our fathers were the channel through which they came; but is it not a little vainglorious to tell the other bodies of Christ that they do not yet possess them, and that we are set to be their teachers? They may be illustrating these principles with a sanity and an accuracy in application which we as yet have never shown.

To use Paul's phrase, would we not be better "fellow helpers to the truth" if we adopted the attitude which Tennyson employed when his friends told him the minor poets were using his methods.

> Once in a golden hour
> I cast to earth a seed;
> Up there sprang a flower—
> The people said—a weed.

**But it grew so tall**
**It wore a crown of light;**
**But thieves from o'er the wall**
**Stole my flower by night.**

**Hear my little fable—**
**All may run who read—**
**Most can raise the flowers now:**
**For all have got the seed.**

The Baptist principle becomes clear at once when we remember that Baptists arose spontaneously in four countries of Europe in answer to a release from three coercions. They came into being, like springs welling up from all parts of the same watershed of history, to proclaim their release from the coercion of belief, from the coercion of ritual, and from the coercion of ecclesiastical authority. By the assertion of one great principle they emancipated themselves from these coercions all at once. It is a strange and troubled story: as confessors they were not always wise or consistent or just. They did not agree with one another. In their new-found freedom of the faith some became anarchists of the spirit. Three things they did, however, which made them a distinctive people. When the coercion of belief was lifted from their hearts they refused to accept a creed in any form: they would never again be entangled in that yoke of bondage. When the coercion of ritual, with all its sacramental inferences, was jettisoned, they were so indifferent to forms that a century had to go by before they came to any agreement among themselves as to a common mode of baptism. When the coercion of ecclesiastical authority was finally cast off they became so intensely individualistic that for another century they seemed to have no power of coherence at all.

The Baptist principle is one, and only one. Around it great inferences and practises have grown up, but the essential principle as distinct from any formal principle is one. It may be stated in many ways, but it has never been better put than in that old Reformation formula: *the competency of the soul before God.* It is a group of rights. It is the right of an unconditioned and unmediated approach to God. It is the right of a distinct and unique experience of God in Christ. It is the right of one's own Christian apprehension and growth. It is the right of private judgment—to see and state the truth as God gives a believer the vision. It is the right of loyalty to the best that a man knows and is assured of. It is the right to stand in judgment before One only: the Christ who has bought a man's life and to whom he must give it back. The Baptists were the first people since the days of the apostles to recover and set forth these rights in all their fulness. Yet this principle, generally indirectly and in the name of an institutional loyalty, has been encroached on more than once by many Baptists who have tried to safeguard it with the weapons taken from those who have never believed it.

It is the principle which leaps out again from the pages of the New Testament—this principle of the competency of the soul before God and its life and expression in private judgment. The appeal for the exercise of this principle comes to every believer, "And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Every Christian is called upon to exercise this principle even when others would be masters of his faith: "Why is my liberty judged by another conscience?" The autocracy that would

give one the particulars of his faith in another is rebuked: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth." The Christian life of dignity and power is based on this principle: "So speak ye and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty." The responsibility of this principle cannot be escaped by the man who believes that he has passed by an inner experience from death to life: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Moreover, and most important of all, no one can find the highest values of God in Christ and Christ in God, no one can say "my Lord and my God" until this principle has become the very habit of his spirit: "No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." The outer coercion of a creed has never made a man say that in truth; such a confession is the instinctive word and worship of an inner compulsion and experience.

It is the deep sense of what this principle means which has always kept the Baptist people from adopting an official and authoritative creed. A creed may be true to the last letter for some men, but as the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit he has not said the same things to the same men at the same time and in the same way—a psychological theory which would be necessary if a creed were to express the private Christian judgment of all true believers at the same time. A creed is the formal judgment of other men made hard and static. It is a load put upon words which no forms of speech have ever been able to carry. Words are only "bondsmen in the dark," and they make shadows which were never created by the sun as it shines for me. For these psychological and Christian rea-

sons there will never be an authoritative and test creed among Baptists. At the very moment they adopted such an instrument they would deny the faith that is in them, they would shame their whole history, and they would repudiate what the Spirit of Truth has given to human hearts.

Every other household of faith has at some time or other adopted a formal and test creed. Baptist Articles of Faith, sometimes called creeds, are nothing more than tentative expressions of Christian doctrine which small groups of Baptists drew up to answer calumnies on their faith and life. Such statements of doctrine have at times been highly useful to make the world understand that a group of people have not learned to say the same things because they were under the compulsion of an outer conformity, but because they were making the confession of a common inner experience. Every attempt to turn these simple articles of faith into test creeds has ended in dismal failure, even when the demand for such conversion came at a time of spiritual and doctrinal declension.

John Gill attempted to force Andrew Fuller into a definitive statement of faith. He said that the published expositions of Fuller were "unsound" and "would subvert the genuine gospel faith." Yet it was on the basis of this so-called "unsound" doctrine that Carey took the gospel of Jesus Christ to India. In 1887 the most popular preacher the Baptists of England have ever known started the so-called "Down-Grade Controversy" by his public insistence that English Baptists should adopt a definite creed. He had felt most keenly what he called an "intolerable doctrinal situation." But it seemed to the Baptist Union that his proposed cure would

not only aggravate the disease, but also deny the very principle which had called them into being as a people. The memorandum drawn up at that time by Doctor Culross and by Dr. Alexander MacLaren is a masterly statement of the essential Baptist principle. It expresses profound sympathy with Mr. Spurgeon's fears, but makes clear that his proposed cure is not even a palliative—it would be only an irritant which would grow steadily worse. When Mr. Spurgeon still insisted on a definitive creed and threatened summary action, a vote of censure was drawn up by Doctor Landels, Mr. Spurgeon's closest friend, in which all further attempts to make Baptists conform in defiance of their principle and their history were not only deprecated, but severely condemned. Doctor Angus was empowered to tell a puzzled world why Baptists would have nothing to do with creeds. He did it in this short crystal-clear statement:

> The Baptist creeds were prepared in the first instance for apologetic and defensive purposes. Even when adopted by any church all sister churches were left free; and in this particular church a considerable latitude of judgment was allowed in interpreting them. They have never been accepted as tests. In trust deeds or rules of association they never appear.

American Baptists have expressed themselves with the same finality, and while there has been more friendliness to statements of faith in this country than among our English brethren, in most times of doctrinal crisis they have repudiated any attempt to harry them into doctrinal conformity. Probably the most useful articles of faith adopted by the churches for edification is the New Hampshire Confession. It was originally intended as a

weapon of offense against Free Baptists, and in many quarters was so popular and on the whole so fair and so free from acrimony that a movement was started to make it a final and authoritative Baptist creed. It is the only Articles of Faith that most Baptists know. As the document was adopted by church after church, by association and convention in rapid order, it came as near representing a consensus of Baptist opinion as any human production is likely to show. But Doctor Wayland, then president of Brown University and the leader of Northern Baptists, showed the utter futility of the plan to make it a test creed. He believed that it was an acceptance of the letter that kills. He wrote these impressive words to restate the Baptist position:

> Every church, when it expresses its own belief, expresses the belief of no other than its own members. It is our essential belief that the Scriptures are a revelation from God given to every individual man. They were given to every individual that he might understand them for himself, and the word that is given to him will judge him at the great day. It is hence evident that we can have no standards which claim to be of any authority over us.

When the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845, a certain group wished to write into the constitution of the Convention a test creed as part of its organic law. The reason for rejecting such a plan is given in the address which the newly formed Convention sent to their Northern brethren:

> Northern and Southern Baptists are still brethren. They differ in no article of the faith. They are guided by the same principles of gospel order. We have constructed for our basis no new creed, acting in this matter upon a Baptist aversion for all creeds but the Bible.

The position of American Baptists has probably never been better stated than by a revered teacher of mine, that great scholar and redoubtable Baptist, Dr. Howard Osgood. In writing to Dr. Philip Schaff, he says:

> Confessions of faith have never been held as tests of orthodoxy, as of any authority or binding force. They merely reflect existing harmony of views and Scriptural interpretation of the churches assenting to them.

It takes high courage to carry this principle through, to believe in it, to trust it so completely that we will keep our human hands off as this ark of the revelation passes through the hearts and lives of men. It is so great that most men have been afraid of it. Even great souls have been guilty of turning its pure gold into an amalgam composed of law and regulation as well as gospel. It is so full of risk that it can never be made safe and sound. The anarchist and the revolutionary have run away with it and have made their appeal to it for their antisocial teachings. All the heresies have run through it, and on its highway there are no toll-posts. Crimes have been committed in its name, and truth has walked over it with bleeding feet. But abuse is always part of the price we pay for our greatest possessions, and this principle does not yield an exception. Macaulay once said that the only cure for the wrongs of liberty is more liberty. We have found out that the only corrective for the abuse of love is more love. Any great principle is like a river; it has muddy and even foul stretches, but if we let it keep running it will clear itself at last. Of all peoples who have at one time or another proclaimed this principle, Baptists

are the only household of faith that have not at one time or another denied it.

Ours has been the courage to believe in it, to hold to it, to refuse to compromise it, even when it seemed to take another face. We have often been afraid of it, but we have held to it just the same. Luther once believed that he could make it the principle of his Christian life. He started the Reformation on this principle. Nothing could be finer and more Baptistic than these words spoken during the controversy at Leipzig:

> As little as a man can exclude me from heaven, so little can he drive me to a belief. For faith is free, and no one can compel another to believe; yes, it is a divine work in his spirit, which is by no means to be shaped or compelled by anything external. I believe that I am a Christian theologian and that I live in a world of truth; therefore will I be free and will give myself into the hands of no authority.

But the man who spake thus bravely became frightened when he saw its actual workings in the case of the Anabaptists—when he discovered fanaticism, extravagance, and a perfect phantasmagoria of beliefs. He gave up his first principle, entered into the realm of compromises and human safeguards—and the Reformation waits still to be completed.

This Baptist principle has had a larger history than the spiritual life of a group who call themselves Baptists. It is a principle which has given the world assurance in many of the possessions which it holds most dear. If any group of people hold it without wavering and prove that it has working validity, there are some things that can never be taken out of human life. If a man is worthy to be a channel for a unique revelation of

truth, his value is assured to the world forever. The dignity of human nature is not something to be proved, but to be assumed. The pressure of the mass comes from the other side—the accumulation of the world's habits, traditions, beliefs, and fears. But when a group of men and women who have known the truth and by that truth are made free, have the courage to proclaim it from the housetops when the procession is singing another song in the street, some things are conserved.

This principle gives the assurance of *democracy;* and no other principle by which men have lived has ever done so. If a man has a truth and experience all his own which may or may not have been given to other men, then all men are bound together in a democracy of life. The spiritual quality of democracy is what assures its social and political form. Every man has his own life and gift, and when all these gifts are seen together and appraised together, then we have democracy. It is hard to keep up our faith in democracy, even if the world has been made safe for it. The president of one of our great universities, of which I happen to be an alumnus, made this frank confession to the men who were graduating in the year that the war broke out:

> Democracy is one of the lost illusions of political states. It has always been an experimental notion, and the last ingenuity of democracy has been tried and found wanting. The time has gone by to say another good word for it. It was only a phase of American life at best, and even as a phase will be forgotten. It will have a lingering sentiment in the pages of emotional literature, in the hopes of some revolutionaries, and in the feelings of a few, a very few, religious sects. Democracy will be followed by the rule of the best, scientifically trained and articulated into our public life.

When a word like that can be spoken at a commencement commemoration, in the bosom of a university once dedicated to liberty, is it not time to restate the essential Baptist principle? Democracy not only asserts the right of every man to the faith that is in him, but to the protection of that right. It may be a very puerile faith, so inept and so unhappy that we wonder at the essential foolishness of the human heart; but it is a man's very own, and if he holds it sincerely, it is entitled to our respect. It may be logically and experimentally a group of incompatibles, but Burbank made his wonder-berry by bringing together the pollen of three poison plants. Many a discovery, stated by itself, is an ultimate poison, but when laid as a vital thing on the vital dust of another truth is the beginning of the new food of the new age. It may be immensely disturbing and may seem to hold a real denial of the great worth-while things, but only the disturbed air is the carrier of life. God's truth is not always given like dew of quietness to human hearts—the voice of gentle stillness came after the fire, the earthquake, and the tempest.

Of all peoples in the world, Baptists should be the least fearful of new ideas. They are the heirs of those who made new ideas the storm-centers of other days. New ideas—notions of pride they were called once—have been one of the marks of the advancing Baptist principle. In the creed of the Council of Concord the many views of Baptists are held up as proofs of the need of an authoritative church. Cromwell once complained that every possible idea and vagary, political, social, and religious, could be found among the Baptists of his army. But the very last thing that Baptists have ever stood

for or believed in has been the repression of these beliefs. We are suffering at the present time from a reaction of fear: we have lost our note of comprehension and are now anxious to have all men say the same things. Democracy is normal and constant inability to sing the doctrinal and political chorus commanded by any group.

The world needs this Baptist principle today. It is doing its best to standardize us. In trying to standardize us, it has only a plan to stereotype us. The great war proved once and for all that no people can be made permanently after a type. It is always the human and the transient among us that wishes to improve on the plan of God, who is always careless of the type. A Baptist church is always a guaranty of that variety of soul and life we call democracy. The stereotyped government, mind, and heart always break down in the presence of any institution or belief that holds to the democracy of life and the individual responsibility of each person. For this reason the president of Czecho-Slovakia wishes his country, just breaking into democracy, to be covered with Baptist churches. For this reason the only significant revival of religion now going on in Europe is in that part of the continent where autocracy was once complete and final and where the people have spontaneously organized churches which at this distance we see have all the marks of Baptist bodies. Every one of them is a guaranty of democracy.

The Baptist principle is a principle with the high courage of *application*. Because it travels from the center to the periphery, it takes in every part and section. Because it is Christian and individual, nothing human is alien to it. All of life is its

sphere—its world of application is within and without. Other bodies of Christians have made cross-sections of life and confined their interest and responsibility to them. Some have said, "The only sphere of the Christian responsibility is the soul." To save the soul is the one quest and duty of life. Others have said, "The only sphere and responsibility is the individual life with all its duties and hopes." To present the soul an acceptable offering to God at the last great day is the one desire of this cross-section of experience. To deal with spiritual facts in eternal relations, and nothing more—this many think to be the gospel. The world for such people is a tide which flows by; it cannot be checked, and it must not be diverted. To cleanse it is either an impossibility or a love's labor lost.

But that has never been the Baptist principle when it has shined out clear and when it has not been confused with party cries and partial or perverted interpretations. The whole world, its sin, need, and wrong, is the field of the application of the principle. If Baptists had accepted only the pietistic theory of their principle, this would be a poorer world in which to live. The German peasants presented twelve different social, economic, and political demands at the beginning of the German Reformation. Those demands, as we read them today, seem to be only obvious and primary, but the men who made them were driven to their death by fire and sword. Both the Protestant and the Catholic leaders accused the Anabaptists of writing that social program or at least of inspiring it. We have no proof that they wrote it, but that they inspired it we can easily believe. Their principle creates discontent with all the forms of life that

do not give the personality its largest chance. The Anabaptists had what we would call today a social service conscience and program before they wrote any articles of faith.

We may reprobate some phrases, but there are facts of history which we must never forget. John Morley tells us that but for the Baptists in his army Cromwell would have listened to the subtle voice that called him to be king. He was afraid of them. What Baptists have done to make a better world in which to live shows their courage: only Matthew Arnold called it the "dissidence of their dissent." Two years ago the people of Connecticut celebrated their emancipation from a State Church. The records tell us that for fifteen years the Baptists of Connecticut petitioned every legislature to do this very thing, and the man who organized the final victory was the pastor of a little church among the hills—a church that never in its history has had more than a hundred members. The leader of the other side was the famous Lyman Beecher, then pastor at Litchfield, who recorded in his diary, on the day the legislature cut the last tie between Church and State, that it was the "blackest day in the history of the world since Calvary." In an article in the *Century* several years ago, when the South had gone over to prohibition irremediably, an unfriendly writer said that the Methodists and Baptists had done it—in particular the Baptists. If there has been any great social and political change in this country or the world with which the Baptist principle has not had something to do, I am unacquainted with it. The Baptist principle is the fighting principle, which, based on the value of a human soul and recognizing God's direct con-

tact with that soul, is one that does not rest till the last wrong of that life has been righted and the last contribution to that life has been made. Two years ago our own George Coleman asked Lloyd George what message he would send to American Baptists? Let Mr. Coleman tell the rest of it: "Quick as a flash he turned and said, 'Tell them that it is Baptist principles we are fighting for in this great struggle. All that Baptists count dear is at stake in this cause.'" The Baptist principle holds the perfect round of all life in its courage and hope; the imperfect arc disappears.

The Baptist principle is the only principle that assures a real *spirituality*. We all know that of all the words we commonly use, spirituality is the one that most persistently defies definition. We know some things it is not: it is not a form of doctrine, it is not a state of emotion, it is not one type of experience. Whatever it may be, it is something that feeds the spirit, enlarges the mind, and enriches the character. There are some who like to think of it as an atmosphere—it is the atmosphere in which the soul feels all its powers at work. There are others who have found that it is a relation—the constant home-coming of the soul to God in Christ. Others still can never get away from the conviction that it is the subtlest and highest loyalty to the Christ of God.

The man who has this spirituality can never think meanly of Jesus Christ. He has come to the Master over the road of a growing apprehension. The man healed from his blindness thought of him first as a man, then as a prophet, and last of all, when he had been found by Jesus, as the Son of God. We are rediscovering all the time that Jesus

forbids our classifying him under any category we know. The names we borrow by which we express this loyalty of our hearts are heavy with history and controversy, but that we cannot help. Whether we call him Son of man or Son of God or the Logos or Lord or God, we are always conscious of the strain of language. We are trying to express what can only be experienced. The Baptist principle can never be satisfied till every man has had this chance. For us, and for all generations of men, Jesus is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

We are first for the fact—the symbol, the perfect symbol, must follow. The working out of the Baptist principle in history seems to have been curiously contradictory in the use of symbols—ordinances we call them when we make them part of church life. There have been Baptists who have ignored them altogether. They were so eager for the fact that they were careless of the way in which the fact was to be clothed in speech and social picture. There have been others who have thought that these symbols as ordinances were only the inner personal concern of believers, to be expressed whenever they desired. The great body of believers have acted on the fine principle that only in the church, as the expression of a great social fact, could these symbols have adequate expression. It has been impossible to stereotype Baptists in their attitude to these ordinances, or to make them live up to the same customs with regard to them. But they have all agreed that when the symbol is expressed at all it should be expressed perfectly: to set forth a death and a resurrection and a constantly growing life. Water, wine, bread—three

things, so Ruskin tells us—stand for the two great facts of all religion—life and purity.

All this, then, with its many-sided hope, is the principle needed for a time like this. It is the only principle that has gotten rid of the usages that have enslaved the world. It knows nothing of creedalism, of ritualism, and of autocracy. It is democratic and knows no rest till every man has had his chance to find out what it means. It is concerned with all life and not with any cross-section simply. It is the one principle that binds heart to heart and hand to hand. It is the only principle for a time of change when God is trying to say new things daily to the sons of men and helping them to see how to solve the riddle of the painful earth.

Is it a final principle and one on which we can all unite? Men have never been able to unite on any other. And in the time, of all times most perilous, in which we now find ourselves, it is the only principle that presents itself for a unifying center, expression, and hope. If we have been afraid of it, let us give it a full chance. There is only one place to which it can lead us, and that is the mind of Christ. When the shadows begin to fall, that is all we wish to know.

When Heine was fighting the Prussian colossus in the early days of its power, he had a dream of one that he called the Democratic Christ. It seemed to him that he was with the gods on Mount Olympus, that he had given himself to them as lords of misrule over a broken and dying world, that he had forgotten himself in the complete ecstacy of his anarchy and lower selfishness. All at once the happy air darkens; he is conscious that the strained

attention of the gods has been turned to a view down the mountain, that the bowl of drunkenness and wassail has been dropped. With them he sees a broken Jew come struggling up the mountain, dragging after him a heavy load of wood which transforms itself into a cross, which the near sight sees has been used. He does not speak a word, but keeps on climbing. The wide path is made for him till he reaches the peak that rises above the mountain's height. There for one instant he stops. Then he lifts his cross and drops it that it may fall into a place prepared for it. The hard rock gives way—a socket for the cross had been made in the hardest, highest, the most intractable place in the world. When the poet looks around, the gods are gone. Where once their table of shame and selfishness stood is now fixed forever the symbol of eternal sacrifice and service. When we climb to find a fixed cross we find that the wrongs and phantoms disappear, and in their place—Christ and his brethren.

# VI

# THE MODERN EVANGEL

## A Message to the Christian Preacher

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# THE MODERN EVANGEL

## A Message to the Christian Preacher

### I

THE Christian faith at its very beginning expressed itself in an evangel; that is, in a message expressive of good-will and a promise of future good addressed to the minds of men. It has expressed itself similarly ever since. It appeals to the *intelligence* of men, taking this word in its richest meaning—their rational thinking, their emotional life, and their conscious will—to man as a self-conscious being aware of his own thoughts, passing judgment on the quality of his own emotions, and directing his own actions by personal choice. It addresses itself to the whole man and thus honors the worth of all that pertains to him as a man. In this way it assumes that man in the entirety of his being can be appealed to by the highest motives, and it expects as hearty a reception by minds of the highest order as by minds of the lowest order. It does not regard intelligence as standing in the way of the good things it seeks to bring to men, but as an important factor in the work of bestowing these good things. Thus the Christian faith ranges freely in all those regions where the human mind operates, and it seeks to make itself at home there.

Our Christian faith, then, is not concerned primarily with establishing and preserving a regular order of outer action or form of organization,

whether you call that order a church or a society or an ethical system. For, were it so, it would tend to become fixed and mechanical in its modes of action, a kind of external form that would gradually lose its appeal to the deepest thought or desire of the human heart and quench the spirit of aspiration and freedom. This is what has happened when Christianity has been interpreted as the equivalent of such an order or form of action.

Nor is our Christian faith primarily concerned with the administration of rites or ceremonies which are supposed to convey some secret or mysterious spiritual good to men. Though it has commonly made use of rites or ceremonial forms, it has not been bound to them, but its power is felt where these are not used at all. Indeed, it can dispense with any or all of them freely when they fail to be of any intelligent use. Were it not so, the Christian faith would be tied down to a fixed routine of orders and officials that would enslave men and dull the activities of their minds. For if reliance is placed on rites, then the inner change which our faith brings about in men must be at bottom unconscious or metaphysical, and men must become passive rather than active in receiving it. As a matter of fact, the attempt has been made more than once to reduce the Christian faith to an external order of life or the forms of a ritual, but again and again it has set these aside in the interest of a free spirit. No! From the very beginning of its history the Christian faith has expressed itself in an evangel, a free message of present and future good to men. A free message, I say, a message that springs from an unbound mind and soars above all the fixed forms of action or

reflection that men have from time to time tried to identify with it.

The Christian believer *has* an evangel. It is a good word, a message of good both present and future. It is a declaration of present good, for it is an utterance of good-will. It speaks in words of kindness and not of ill-will. It declares a kindness toward the hearer on the part of the one who speaks to him and on the part of Him for whom the messenger speaks. It declares God's good-will as well as man's. And so it tries to fill the world with goodness, kindness, love. It makes promise also of good to come. It is prophetic. It bids men look to the future and to do it with confidence and courage. It seeks to drive away foreboding and terror and cowardice. It is a message of hope. For this reason it seeks to come first to those who seem to need it most, to those who by reason of outward conditions or inward state are cast down or defeated. It tries to put new heart into them and make them more than conquerors through Him who loved them and gave himself for them.

Our message must be something more than a vague utterance of hope or cheer. If it is to be effective, it must have some definiteness about it. Men wish to know what it is that gives us a right to tell them of a future that will be better than the present. We must have more than good wishes. Men do not wish to be caught with mere fancies. If there is a time coming when the deepest needs of their hearts will be satisfied, there surely is something we can point to at the present that gives us warrant for the expectations we hold out to them for the future. The great question arises, What can we do to meet this demand? What

can we show to men that stands as a surety of a salvation to come? The answer to this question becomes the matter of our immediate concern.

The starting-point for the answer is in the basic message of early Christianity. Its first announcement was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There was a double appeal in this message. It aroused the hopes of men and thereby aroused their consciences. It aroused their hopes because, first, *it was prophetic.* It taught them to look to the future rather than the past. Secondly, *it was aspirational.* It told them to look upward rather than downward. "Lift up your heads and see the heavens. Kingdoms of the earth are oppressive. There is coming a kingdom of the heavens, higher than earthly kingdoms as the sky is high above the earth." Thirdly, *it was social in its outlook.* It pointed to the well-being of the community rather than to a merely individual good. Fourthly, *it emphasized immediacy.* The kingdom was at hand. They might personally have a part in it. It was no mere "far-off divine event" of which men might, in their leisure or loneliness, dream, but it was an imminent event for which they had better be getting ready if they were not to miss it.

*The primitive message also aroused the consciences of men.* They were not led to expect that they might just slip into the kingdom or that the world was moving on by such laws that things would turn out well in the end, no matter what they did—nothing of the sort! The message aroused the consciences of men because, first, *it drew attention to the spiritual rather than the material, to the inward rather than the outward.* It did not aim at fanning

their dissatisfaction with the economic conditions of their times so much as with their own moral condition. It traced their unhappiness primarily to themselves. Secondly, *it was a moral stimulant rather than a sedative.* It spoke of action rather than possession. It did not seek to set men brooding over their misfortunes or even over their sins, but it stirred them to prepare for better things by becoming better themselves. Thirdly, *it appealed to their power of initiative.* They were not to wait for the kingdom to come, but were to move in advance of its coming. It appealed in this way to their will and elevated their self-respect. Fourthly, *it aroused them to the imperativeness of a moral revolution.* It urged them to no mere improvement or betterment, though it did all that, but it was radical in its purport. Men were to become different in the quality of their very minds. The good things promised were of such a high order that men might obtain them only through an inner renovation.

There is a third feature of importance in the primitive evangel, namely, its connection with Jesus Christ. It was in connection with his appearing among men that it was first announced. The meaning of the message had to be learned from his character and career. The men that followed him associated the coming of the kingdom with a future achievement they expected of him. This expectation was greatly intensified by his death and resurrection before the eyes of his disciples. Then they felt more than ever that the announcement of the imminence of the kingdom was inseparable from the announcement of the imminence of the King. Jesus was King, anointed by God to establish the heavenly reign on the earth. Then the message took the ad-

ditional form, Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). His death might seem to nullify such a belief, but his resurrection made it sure. Both shed a great light on the nature of the kingdom and the way it was to be brought in. It was such a kingdom as the Crucified and Risen should rule or establish. The profound significance of saying that such a one as he could be the Jewish Messiah grew upon his followers as the time passed. The range of his relation to men was extended rapidly. He was felt to be the Saviour of the world and his crucifixion itself to be the means of his attaining to that supreme place. Men saw that he was God's great gift to the world and began to ascribe to him the dignity that could belong to none but the divine. God was in this Christ, putting the sins of men away by his death and bringing them to his house of many mansions. The evangel became an announcement of a boundless grace for sinners that delivered them from their sins and made them already here on the earth the heirs of the kingdom that was not only coming but was actually here, at least in its beginnings.

The prospect of those early followers of Jesus continually broadened. They began to believe that the whole world would share the good that had come to them. A new community grew up around this faith and sought to make itself universal. The promise of a universal kingdom was given force by the presence in the world of a religious communion that kept creating these communities in the places whither it went and bore the secret of the kingdom in its heart. Its life of gentle ministry to the poor and friendless and broken-hearted and outcast and sinful and fallen was itself an evangel in deeds that

turned men to repentance and made the whole creation new to them.

Our evangel, if it be Christian, must have the same inner character as theirs. But it need not be spoken in the same words. In truth one might say that it *must not* be spoken in the same words. For words change their meaning with other changes in time or they lose all meaning when used as fixed forms of utterance. Our evangel must have the heart of theirs in it, but it must come to men of our day with the same naturalness and homelikeness to the ways of human thinking now as theirs did then. No man can have an evangel for his own time who does not understand sympathetically his own time. We cannot treat the people of our time as if their needs could be met in the same way as the needs of a people who lived one hundred or five hundred years ago. Whether they are *better* than the people of a by-gone time it may not be necessary to determine, but we may be sure that in important respects they are *different.* For human life ever moves onward; whether it be upward or downward, it moves.

I say, we also must put ourselves into sympathetic relations with our contemporaries. It will not do to assume that they have no concern about themselves or the world in which they live, or that the practical or theoretical problems on which they are engaged are idle or trifling. It must be assumed that men are serious at heart and that their problems are worthy of the best that is in men, including ourselves. More—we must feel at one with them in their difficulties and come to them, not in the arrogant spirit of one who is ready to settle the issues with a word and to denounce those who

cannot accept his solution or adopt his standard of things, but as one who trusts that he is being divinely guided in his own thought and action, who feels a desire to communicate to others the good things that have come to him and desires to have their fellowship in his life. Such an attitude of mind is itself somewhat of an evangel to men, for it assures them of companionship.

Of course, it is not to be forgotten that the people of this time or of any time differ greatly in the extent to which they feel or represent the influences that mold contemporary life. Some of them live in the outskirts of the life of their time and some of them very near to the center of it. Yet it is true that they all feel the same general influences in some degree. The ideas which are moving in the minds of the most highly intelligent have a way of percolating through very quickly to the minds of the masses, so that the issues that men face, especially in such a land as this, are everywhere pretty much the same.

These issues are to be taken in their deepest sense. We are to realize, if possible, how men are likely to feel about them in the future, for it is of the future of men we are thinking. It is necessary that we forecast the future and divine its character. Our message must always be the message of a prophet. We are to ask ourselves, not only, What are men facing now? but, What will men meet in the next quarter of a century? What in the next century? For all men who truly live, live more in the future than in the past. By nature men anticipate coming events, though often very incorrectly. They carry in their bosoms many hopes and fears. Not so much the present facts as the probable facts

of a coming day exercise their minds. They want the strength to face the imminent facts with courage. They want good news of things to come.

## II

If our preaching be well directed it will take effect first of all on those who are the most deeply sensitive to the spiritual needs and dangers of the time. Men who apprehend the moral and religious situation in which they and their contemporaries live, are the most likely to respond to the appeal to the highest motives. They become guides to the Christian preacher on the question of the peculiar character and emphasis his message should receive. Others who are less fully alert are likely to be aroused by their contact with the first class and the message that is directed to them. What, then, are the prevailing conditions in which the most fully awakened recognize present spiritual needs?

First, there is the deadening influence of a practical materialism. This has come upon men partly by reason of the very progress they have recently made in intelligence. The intellectual task of the modern man has not been especially that of mastering the analysis and systematic construction of mental processes or the elaboration of new philosophical systems, but the mastery of the forces of nature and making them tributary to human toil or pleasure. The result is an unparalleled improvement in mechanical invention, natural productivity, and economic wealth. If we turn to the colleges and compare the numbers of students taking courses in the various departments of the practical sciences with the numbers taking courses in the humanities, we see how powerful is the tide of interest in the

means of acquiring the mastery of the material resources of the world.

It was not to be expected that such a change in the direction and effectiveness of human energy would be without effect on man's conception of life and its purposes. For one thing, there has been a vast accumulation of wealth by a portion of the people and a general increase by nearly all of the people in civilized countries. They have felt themselves superior to other peoples who have not made such economic advances and have been making their influence over those peoples profoundly felt. There has been a tendency, perhaps greater than ever before, to estimate men according to their wealth-producing or wealth-controlling ability. Men of great wealth have not failed to use their money to erect colleges and many kinds of humanitarian institutions or to control the intellectual output of the printing-press, the platform, and even the pulpit. It cannot be said that they have been selfish in this. Nevertheless, this has tended to a certain laxity of judgment as to the method of gaining wealth so long as it is expended in a commendable way.

Accordingly, for another thing, there has been a strong wish and a hope to accumulate wealth on the part of many whose early circumstances in life would have excluded the possibility in former times. The multitudes have entertained ambitions of prosperity and are apt to be discontented if they do not succeed. Jealousy has been nurtured in many minds and the relations between rich and poor have often been embittered. This has always been the case, we know, but it is emphatically so today. This is a dangerous thing. Great possibilities of moral degradation and of criminality lie here.

A brutalizing tendency appears in these circumstances. For material power is in itself only brute power, and the man whose chief reliance is on it is likely to become pretty much of a brute. If the desire for wealth for its own sake becomes epidemic, the brutalizing trend of life becomes immensely powerful, and those finer qualities of life, those homely virtues that decline to come out into public view and neither can be purchased nor increased by the possession of money, are discontinued.

Another morally enervating force accompanies this brutalizing influence of the love and admiration of material power. Pleasures of a superficial and low order and some of a higher order are available for the wealthy. When these pleasures have been indulged in with harm to others, by means of wealth their superficial consequences can be escaped, in many cases. For this reason the deeper and more lasting consequences are the surer to come. Devotion to pleasure for its own sake is degrading. It is showing itself today in the display of extravagance by both rich and poor. It is showing itself in the multiplication of the ways of obtaining pleasure, and many of them are bad. And thus people lose their grip on the great things that lie in the depths of the human soul and that can be got only by patient mining. They are pretty sure to fail to see that there is a world eternal and invisible to which their lives were intended to attain, but which can be found only by the hard road of toil and patience and self-denial.

It is not to be denied that the churches are sometimes caught in this maelstrom and strive to win their way to superficial success by reliance on wealth and by catering to the insane lust for enter-

tainment. Even epidemics of so-called evangelism turn out at times to be little better than a noisy "religious" spree. These are some of the things that fill the minds of many serious people today with the gravest concern, and if the preacher of the Christian gospel is to cope with these evils he must do it through the confidence and sympathy of these richer souls.

Secondly, we are afflicted today with the prevalence of many low social ideals and the perpetuation of social wrongs. The class-divisions and the struggles for supremacy between different sections of the population are so well known as not to require specific mention. The investors of gold and the investors of brawn are organized in opposing camps even when engaged in a form of external cooperation in the production of wealth. They quarrel over the question of their respective shares. It is not a new quarrel, but that the old quarrel should be renewed with prospects of baneful consequences to all parties in our times is the serious thing. Organization has become so essential to success in the strife that the organizations often crush the very individuals whose interests they are supposed to serve. How many a man is the slave of the company or the union to which he has attached himself in this conflict! How many a demagogue lords it over their souls! How prone the promoters of a proposed social order are to rob a man of his initiative and sense of personal dignity and responsibility, in the interest of a system invented for his supposed benefit! Besides, there are all those who have no part or lot in these disputes, but whose rights are trampled on by both parties. Society threatens to become organized selfishness and to

obliterate the individual. How far is all this from the spirit of the kingdom of God! How contrary to the spirit of Jesus!

The very strife itself between the opposing social classes tends to degrade those who participate in it. For the idea underlying it often seems to be that a man's social rank rests on his possession of an adequate economic basis of life. That personal character constitutes true worth, and that it can never be fostered by external legislation or material wealth, but only by a free unconstrained communion of men in the things of the spirit, seems to have escaped the attention of multitudes. Forgetting this, even the churches may turn over their real work of enriching men in inner moral wealth to others and devote themselves to the promotion of formal legislation. No matter how deserving may be the effort to obtain legislation to remedy the wrongs of society, for the churches to divert their energies in this direction seems to indicate a lack of confidence in the winning and constraining power of truth and the responsiveness of the human heart to the highest appeals.

Thirdly, many serious-minded people are distressed over the apparent confusion or decline of moral standards. The radical temperament, the lowering of respect for tradition as commanding our allegiance, the chaotic condition of society in many places through the mingling of peoples of many races and the diversity of their moral convictions, the tendency of liberty to degenerate into license, the intensity of the struggle for existence, in some cases, and for supremacy, in other cases, have greatly strengthened the impulse to make material prosperity and pleasure the ideal. In many places

there seems to be a strange want of moral conviction of any sort.

Influences of a theoretical kind have operated in the direction of confirming these tendencies. The evolutionary theory of life has been used as an endorsation of the aim to attain to self-fulfilment by sacrificing others to one's own interest. The ideal of efficiency gains the place of supremacy that at one time was allowed to the idea of purity. To say that the strong are competent to rule over the weak seems tantamount to saying that the strong ought to rule and the weak, as the inefficient, ought to be set aside for the sake of a better breed.

There is also an apparent tendency to regard all moral law as only expressive of temporary rules according to which men at one time found that their life could be fuller and their condition improved, and to hold that these laws are therefore selfish at bottom. The discovery through historical investigation that many of the rules of morality can be traced to empirical conditions has seemed to confirm the looser tendency in morals. The same result seems at times to accrue from the psychology of morals.

A sceptical attitude toward the idea that morality should be supreme in human life has become widespread. It runs concurrently with the suspicion that all our individual lives, having sprung from physical or material forces, finally return to unconscious dust and leave us no hope of an eternal existence as conscious beings. Immortality becomes a vain dream, and the idea of a personal recompense in a world to come equally vain. A long life, a healthy life, a wealthy life, and a pleasant life becomes the practical ideal.

In evidence that these views are wide-spread and powerful in practical results we are referred to the repudiation of supreme moral obligations on the part of nations and to their confidence in the supreme value of material power; to the epidemics of political immorality and corruption so familiar to us all; to the dishonesty, overworking, and unscrupulousness of business methods; to the increasing looseness of the marriage bond, the willingness to treat it as a matter of temporary convenience, and the tendency to commit the rearing and education of children to the social order established by law rather than to parents, and to regard a good life as a matter of eugenics or good stock-raising by breeding scientifically conducted.

In short, there is a vast deal of unhappiness in the world because men have lost sight of the moral law and do not know how to get it back again.

Fourthly, I have left the most serious consideration to the last—there seems to be a felt loss of confidence in the traditional religious verities. These can maintain their hold on men only when there is a powerful moral conviction joined to an assurance of the immediacy of the help that comes from above. Religion and morality rise and fall together. Where a materialistic spirit, looseness of morals, and neglect of the higher interests of the souls of men prevail, religious doubt is an inevitable accompaniment. If there has been a failure of the traditional defenses of religious beliefs to meet the new demands that rise from general intellectual progress, then this falling away in the vigor of religious faith has been accelerated thereby. There are many who feel that this is what has occurred in wide areas of late.

There can be no doubt that, while the majority of the common people have little acquaintance with the actual movements of scholarly and scientific investigation on the critical side, yet they have a sort of inkling that something serious has happened—that the former confidence in the absolute trustworthiness of the narratives and the ideas contained in the Bible has been shaken, that men can point no longer with clear confidence to a distinct written revelation from God, that Christianity no longer can make good the former claims of its adherents that it alone is the true religion and that salvation is found in no other, that it is uncertain whether Jesus Christ has anything to do with the present problems of men and their solution, that there can be no longer any firm assurance that there is a God and a higher world to which we go when we die or can go now while we live. And it must also be said that the very missionary propaganda throughout the world, on which the Christian churches have set their hearts, has produced an unlooked-for reflex influence. Heathen faiths have disclosed their own merits as well as defects. The history of religion shows that divers faiths have much in common and that religions, like nations, rise and fall again to make place for others. Men cannot help but reexamine their own faith and ask whether it is likely to survive in the end, and whether all religions are to perish at last. I do not wish to make too much of the scepticism of the present day, but I am pretty sure that a good many earnest men are not a little distressed over the apparent falling away in matters of moral conviction and religious belief. Have we a gospel that will present sure ground of faith to these distressed and perplexed souls?

## III

Before trying to answer this question directly let us look for a few moments at the more positive side of the present situation in the religious and moral world. There are certain longings and aspirations and convictions that earnest people entertain today which amount to a very valuable body of spiritual assets, to which the Christian preacher can now appeal. There are people who are profoundly concerned with the very problems that concern us here, only their concern is directed to more concrete situations than ours and perhaps has the disadvantage of being limited by a narrower horizon. Let us take stock of these spiritual assets.

In the first place, we should be encouraged by the fact that the present age is critical in temper. That men should be slower than formerly to accept the statements made to them by the messengers of the Christian faith is no proof that it is at bottom an unbelieving age. Men are probably no more prone to examine and test by all the powers of mind at their command the affirmations of the religious believer than they are to test all other statements of whose truth they are not assured at the outset. Historians, men of science, philosophers, social and political reformers, are called upon to submit to the same severe criticism of their propositions as is the Christian preacher. There is no unfairness shown to the man who professes to announce to men a message of divine mercy and goodness. Men listen to him if he has anything believable and worth saying to communicate to them, so far as I can see.

It is quite desirable that our audiences should be thoroughly critical. Credulous people do not

make the best listeners. People who are easily led to believe are about as easily led to disbelieve. People who believe the truth without taking the trouble to examine its claims for themselves are just as likely to believe error and to be carried off into fanaticism or superstition. Such people are apt to be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and they make poor Christians. We want men to be fair and just. We want men to be honest. Our age is intensely critical because it has seen so much of dishonesty and fraud in matters of morals and religion, as well as in other things, and because it desires truth above all else.

If this is so, then one of the great assets of the time is the spirit of sincerity abroad. Sham and hypocrisy are more detestable than ever to men. Men are shy of the preacher who tries to hide his shallowness or selfishness under the mask of sanctimoniousness. They also distrust the man who is glib in his speech when religious matters are referred to. They are keen to know whether there be anything more than words he has to offer. The man who complains of the severity of the test to which the people put the Christian preacher today is unfit for the work of the gospel. Genuine men, men who know whereof they affirm, men who appreciate human freedom, are glad to have their views subjected to the hardest trials possible, in the confidence that nothing is lost thereby. If we are Protestants and believe in the rights of the personal intelligence, then we may be assured that the more critical our hearers, the more likely are they to accept our message, or, if they cannot do so, then to help us find a message that will be truer to the reality of things.

This implies—if we go a little further into the practical field—that we shall not talk down to the people, but take our place by their side as their fellow pilgrims through a world in which we all need all the help we can obtain from one another. It implies that we expect them to believe what we say, not because *we* say it, but because the human heart everywhere will discover in our words the secret that every heart longs for; that is, the voice of the divine Spirit that speaks to whom and through whom he will. It implies that what we say is so far from being alien to their deepest nature that, in order to be true to themselves, they must receive our evangel to their hearts. By being critical they assist us to lay aside every false and unworthy idea and, in a sense, they become to us also evangelists—preachers of the good news that men are sincere.

In the second place, the apparent worldliness of the people and their disinclination to listen to many of the things that used to be said about the future life is not without value to the Christian preacher. It is quite true that this tendency may easily go to an extreme. It may be that health, prosperity, freedom, peace at times blur the vision of a better world to come. The correction of this fault will come in due time, I doubt not. In the meantime, if we are to take men as they are, we shall find reason for appreciation of their devotion to temporal conditions. It may well be that men are taking the present life more seriously than they used to do. It may be that they are getting farther away from the artificial and narrow monastic ideals of life and nearer to the appreciation of those ideals which the layman may adopt. It may be that they

are less inclined than before to find an excuse for the neglect of some pressing temporal and physical need among men on the plea that life was so brief and so unhappy anyway that it did not much matter how much men suffered here so long as they reached a blessed hereafter. It may well be that men see more clearly than they used to do that this world and the world to come are not separated by an impassable gulf, but character and worth are estimated in the same way in both. If this be so, then men are taking the present actual life as a great charge more seriously than they used to do.

If, then, we find that there are a good many people who are somewhat disinclined to say anything about the emotional side of Christianity or are even inclined to discredit the professions that Christians are accustomed to make of inward experiences that lift them up into a higher realm, but are disposed to attend when we speak of the material conditions under which men are compelled to live or the social situations which oppress and degrade them, there is opened to us an exceedingly valuable avenue of approach to their minds. It may be no great loss if, for a while at least, we find it necessary to talk with men about feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and releasing the prisoner and getting them into comfortable homes, and say less about the doctrines of regeneration and justification and sanctification and atonement. For it is with men we have to deal in the end, and not with doctrines. If their consciences are working in the direction of remedying material and social conditions, if doctors and nurses who do not say anything about their desire to preach to the heathen are nevertheless preaching a message of good-will and vicariousness

by exposing their lives to danger and to death in the attempt to heal the cruel wounds in human bodies and drive away physical disease, if men are not all pouring out their money to support mission boards and churches, but are sharing their bread with the hungry and their strength with the weak and helpless; it may be that in the sight of God these people are better than we are, and instead of condemning them we should come to them with the good news that inasmuch as they have done it to one of the least of those whom the great Healer called his brethren, they have done it to him.

We may go a good deal further. We may well believe that those who do not forget that men have bodies and that they live in a physical world, will not forget in the end that men have spirits also and live in a spiritual world at the same time. We may trust that their views of the needs and possibilities of men will be all the healthier because they have not shrunk from facing the plain physical facts that crowd in upon the lives of our fellow men to such an extent that some of them have a poor chance to see beyond the physical to the spiritual, and that their faith may transcend ours at last.

A third asset on which we can count in our appeal to men today is the estimate placed on personal worth. We hear a good deal said about the manner in which the vast industrial, commercial, and political systems of modern times deprive the individual of his rights and tend to degrade him to the level of a slave or even a machine. Perhaps the charge is only too true. It has always been true that the individual has had to fight for his liberty against society, even against the best order of society that has ever been seen. If we hear more

now about this matter than men used to hear, it does not prove that the individual is at a greater disadvantage than he used to be. It may only prove that we have become more sensitive to his wrongs and the more determined to right them. If men resent the nature of the situation that threatens to reduce them to the rank of a cog in a wheel, this may be the result of a healthier view of their own dignity and a greater courage to fight life's battle without leaning on the external support of a system. At any rate, I am sure that we live in a time when we do not need to prove, but men assume, as an axiom, the supreme worth of personality. The evidence is abundant and plain.

It is seen in the wide-spread and conscientious efforts being made to remedy the bad physical conditions under which many people are apparently compelled to live. Why is there so much outcry against the sweat-shop, the bad housing of the poor, and the filthy condition of the slums? It is not because we have come to be more offended by physical disabilities than by spiritual degradation, but because knowing more fully than our ancestors the intimacy of the connection between physical and spiritual well-being, our consciences are aroused by the evidence that many people are so placed that their prospects of fulfilling the meaning and worth of a human life are prejudiced from the very day of their birth. And we feel responsible. It is not that men of our day are more concerned with feeding and clothing human bodies than they are with saving human souls, but it is because they are concerned with the man who is both body and soul, the personality in whom body and soul are one.

It is seen in the conception and methods of edu-

cation today—poor enough still, I am sorry to say. The child, the youth, is no longer treated as the passive and obedient recipient of the knowledge which the teacher is authorized to communicate to him. We no longer say: "Ram it in, jam it in; children's heads are hollow." We no longer believe that the teacher has the right to demand acceptance of a literary, or scientific, or theological creed on pain of some sort of damnation. Rather, he now stands before his pupil as one who invites the student to share with him the riches of mind that lie ready to be appropriated by him who has the courage and perseverance to do so. The student cannot be *given* truth, strictly speaking, but he must *discover* it; in fact he must *make* it, in a sense, for himself. The attitude of the teacher toward the pupil is one of profound respect. It is no wonder, therefore, if the community in its zeal for human rights sometimes takes the dangerous step of entering into the privacy of the home and saying to the parents that their children must be entrusted to the hands of others for so much of the time as is necessary, in order that the child may have due opportunity to come to himself. For, if parents have rights, children have rights too. The home life that subjects the members of the family to deprivation of inherent rights must submit to interference, in the sacred name of personal worth.

This gospel of personal worth is heard in the methods of our modern jurisprudence, slow and halting though they may be. People are no longer content to know that each criminal has received due punishment for his crime. They want also to know what good is to come out of that punishment. They feel that the personality of the criminal is truly

sacred, notwithstanding his crime, and that justice fails if it aims only to punish as a method of securing an equivalence of suffering or loss to the guilt of his deed. Justice, so far from being the antithesis of love, must be permeated with the spirit of love, if it is to be true. Courts assemble not merely to kill or destroy, when killing and destruction call for such punishment, but in order that men, including the criminal himself, may have true life, and have it abundantly. Justice must be remedial in intent or it is a perversion. The courts are instituted as means of salvation. Hence, even if the dread penalty of death must be inflicted, this too must be carried out with the aim of delivering the criminal from that which is worse than death.

This spirit has entered into international relations. The efforts to establish better relations between the nations and to mitigate the horrors of war, if war does come, are directed less by the purpose of securing the good of each nation as such than with the purpose of making it possible to live a pure human life anywhere in the world. It is the same at bottom with the "foreign missionary" movement. Religious people cannot bear the thought of leaving any human being without the opportunity to enter into the highest life possible to humanity. All men, no matter who, are worthy that we lay down our lives for them.

Thus far concerning the encouragement that comes to the Christian preacher from a study of the conditions around us. Much more might be said on this point, but what has been said surely suffices to show that the very situation that confronts the preacher, when rightly interpreted, becomes a sort of silent evangel. This brings us at length to

the direct answer to the question, What is the evangel which the Christian preacher may bring to this present age? What has he to say to men that will appeal to their hearts with power to save?

## IV

One word of caution must be interposed before the answer is given: It is not the *quantum* of what we have to say that gives us a right to be heard, but the quality of it. Whether we have many things to say will not matter so very much so long as we have one thing to say that is worthy of being said everywhere and all the time, though, it may be, in a thousand ways. The length of a man's *credo* or the number of articles in it may only confuse and dishearten people, but the *strength* of it, even though it contain only a single article, may carry the speaker right into the hearts of his hearers and win them. For our faith is not many, but one. The limitations of my space require that I state the evangel in the rather unemotional language of the classroom instead of the free rhetoric of the public platform. The order of statement is not specially significant.

1. *The modern Christian evangel is an announcement of the reality of the spiritual world.*

That there is a physical world men know full well. They are living constantly in its presence. They feel its power over them. They find it necessary to know and obey its laws. But the physical is not all. There is something more and greater. The spiritual is as real as the physical. We know it because we are of it and participate in its activities. The thoughts that move within us, the hopes and ambitions that rise, the love and hate, the joys and

sorrows that are associated with them, are more to us than all physical existence could be without them. Indeed the physical world has little or no concern for us apart from the deep spiritual human interests affected by it. Its forces attract or appal us because they tell us of that which is within. The longer we live, the more profoundly we are aware that the vast physical world exists for the spirit, and not the spirit for it. So much do we feel this that we proceed almost as if by instinct to treat the physical world as the instrument of our minds and subordinate to the purposes of the mind. The great world about us moves us to admiration because it serves to disclose and call into activity the hidden powers of our spiritual nature. Moreover, the awful occurrences in the physical world which appal us remind us of the more awful occurrences in the realm of our spirits. The only real tragedies are the spiritual. The more we know of this higher world the more its mysteries, its grandeurs, and its terrors impress us.

2. *This spiritual world is a world of inner fellowship.* None of us is alone in it. Mind communes with mind, heart with heart, soul with soul—and that incessantly. The physical world in its minute or greater portions may be the medium of this fellowship, but the communicating spirit of man that uses the medium is greater than the medium. If we erect great edifices of brick and stone in which men may assemble or upon which they may gaze in wonder and awe, it is because these structures can be made to speak the language of the human spirit and men may read in them the thoughts that move us all in common most deeply. If by instruments made out of common dead matter we may

make sounds seraphic that awaken tender memories and high hopes and that rouse us to courage and high endeavor, it is because thereby the swelling and surging currents of our spirits communicate themselves to others and our human communion is enlarged and enriched. And when we think of the human institutions which the longing and fulfilment of this fellowship creates—the churches with their tender ministry to human need, of warning and comfort, of peace and good-will; the schools with their efforts to raise the thoughts of men to range widely and orderly in this great universe; the literatures of the peoples; the commercial and industrial organizations and the great transportation systems; we see that all these, after all, are only instrumental to that fellowship of men with men without which we should not be higher than the beasts. The world in which we men truly live is a world of spiritual communion. That is to say, it is a world of persons. It is a world in which each one is aware of himself in being aware of others, a world in which each one is both giving and receiving of himself to and from others. It is a world in which we are making our own destinies—as the constituents of the physical world do not—and at the same time are having our destinies made by others as well as making theirs. For this reason it is a world of glorious and appalling possibilities for each member of it. It is the world in which the horizons of life are continually lifting away to the eternal and infinite.

3. *The secret and source of this world of personal fellowship in spirit is found in the presence of a supreme and perfect personal Spirit who is ever accessible to our human spirits and minister-*

*ing of his own spirituality to us.* In other words, in this world of ours we are always in relation with God—the most joyful and most awful fact we can grasp. To be a person is to be akin to him and to have relations with him of which our relations with human persons is a sign. The harmonies and disharmonies, the loves and the hates which we may feel toward other persons may be true of our relation to him. To be in positive fellowship with him is to know the secret of life and of the world. To fail of this fellowship is to miss this secret and to meet the tragedy and loss that turns everything else into tragedy. To leave the presence of this visible physical world is not to leave his presence. He is the invisible and ever-present. The world is his instrument as we seek to make it ours, and by its constancy we perceive his constancy too. The very course of human history tells us the method of his working out his purposes in men. But tell me—is he personally interested in us? Does he care for us with anything of that tenderness with which we care for one another? Some have said, Yes, and some have said, No. Is the announcement of his presence and working an evangel? Our next statement will give the Christian answer.

4. *The modern Christian evangel is an announcement of the revelation of the inmost nature of God in Jesus Christ.* He is that revelation. For the very selfhood of God lies in his character. It is character that constitutes God what he is, as it is character that constitutes us what we are. What would mean the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of God to us but a source of infinite terror if he were not all-good, all-gracious, and all-loving? It is this the presence of Jesus in our world

has assured to us. In the humanness of his personality is disclosed the Godness of his moral self. Let it never be forgotten that the interest men have in God is found ultimately in his moral selfhood. When men speak of the essence of God, if they mean anything different from this, they are not saying anything of peculiar concern to us spiritual beings. But God, in his heart of hearts, has come to the world in Christ. We are not so deeply concerned about the external manner of his coming into the world or his going out of it, as we are with the meaning of his presence in it. With this we are infinitely concerned. And the sweetness of our Christian message is found in that it has discovered in the lowly life, the perfect purity, the tender service of Jesus and his ceaseless loving pursuit of the sinner the love of the eternal God. Yes, when we see him hung upon his cross for our sins we see the vicariousness of God. There is our ground of hope for the sinner and the way of the reconciliation of men with God. It is impossible for us to believe that Jesus perished. He is King in the spiritual world, for God lives for us in him, and he lives for us in God. We find ourselves and discover our true destiny in him, for he has bestowed his Spirit upon men as their inalienable heritage.

5. *The coming of Jesus Christ and his evangel into the world is a disclosure of the ineffable worth of every member of our human family.* He discovered men to themselves. The worth of men is seen to lie not so much in what they are as in what they are to be. Jesus Christ is the revelation of our human possibilities. We are beginning—alas! with our slowness to learn, only beginning—to understand why he related those parables of the Lost

Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son. He was "never despairing" of men. His interest in them is the interest of God. And so as we too turn our attention to the poorest or frailest or worst of our race we see something in them that outweighs their sins. He died for them, and they are worthy that we die for them too. As we look upon them our hearts swell with respect and concern for them all. No word of contempt for any of them must ever be uttered. Jesus has enabled us to weave a new bond of sympathy and fellowship with them. The natural human fellowship spoken of earlier becomes supernatural, for all "nature" must minister to it. Hence the deepening horror that fills our minds when some one of these misuses his trust and comes short of his true destiny. Hence also the even greater horror when one of these free human spirits invades with a deadly virus the life of another and dooms it downward.

6. *Our evangel is a promulgation of the law of love as the ultimate law of the universe.* It has been already pointed out that the material in the universe is the instrument of the spiritual. We now see the character of the spiritual that claims the power to use the material for its purposes. "We see not yet all things put under" this spiritual power, but the prophecy of it is set in every Christian heart. Hence the modern evangelist has no sense of shrinking from the great material enterprises of life which he sees being pushed forward with masterful skill and zeal today. The law of the love of God in Christ will govern all these things some day. He does not tremble before the advance of science and philosophy or denounce the men who are devoted to these tasks, since he sees also in

them the marks of the progress of the human spirit to its rightful sovereignty in the world, and he knows full well that the labors of these men level down the mountains and level up the valleys for the King to come to his own in all our hearts. And so he pronounces blessing upon them. Indeed, all the common tasks of life now take on a sacred character. For, with the impartation of the Spirit of Christ to them they become the indispensable and holy means of establishing the kingdom of God in the world.

The modern evangel is not a prophecy of the world's destruction or of an impending slaughter of great multitudes of our fellow men in order that the Christ may rule over the others, but it is an announcement that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our Father too, and that as King of love he sits on his throne to reign and rule till all things are lovingly brought into subjection to him, and " God be all in all."

# VII

# THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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# THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

IN its justified revolt against the notion of an authoritative church, Protestantism has often lost a real spiritual asset. Christianity is, after all, a religion which expresses itself in church life continuing generation after generation. We are dependent on the vitality of our churches for the effective propagation and cultivation of the Christian life. To think of our religion as if there were no church is to leave out of account that Christianity which is visibly before men, and which is the living expression of social Christian living.

Yet this omission is often made. The nineteen centuries of Christian history, during which the church has been active, are frequently ignored. In our endeavor to secure genuine Christianity we place the individual face to face with the Bible, leaving unbridged the centuries which stretch between the New Testament and our own day. The value of thus judging religion in the light of the ideals of the New Testament is, of course, self-evident; it must ever be a guiding power in a Christian church. But there is one unfortunate consequence of a too exclusive a concern with the New Testament. The impression is fostered that Christianity is something formally decreed in an official document. Attention comes to be centered on the things which are plainly mentioned in this document. Some of these things, just because they are explicitly mentioned, may come to be considered the

very essence of Christianity, and may then be exalted in such a way as to impair the real values of our religion. We Baptists, for example, have been quick to see that when baptism is emphasized as something important in and of itself, a betrayal of spiritual interests results. We insist that baptism shall be valued as a sign and a reenforcement of a genuine experience of regeneration, and not left as a mere external rite arbitrarily required.

If we habitually use the Bible as a formal collection of precepts we inevitably think of Christianity in statutory form. But we ought to know, if we have learned the spirit of Jesus and of Paul, that the gospel is something different from the law. It is life. It furnishes the "spirit which maketh alive." Our business as Christians is to live and to preach the gospel.

Now the gospel, with its life-giving power, has been active all through the centuries in the church. True, it has often been perverted and misinterpreted. Ritual and routine and creed have often crept into the first place in the thinking of men. Yet in spite of perversions and obstructions, the life of the gospel has steadily continued from generation to generation, and it is this life which links us in spiritual continuity with the early days of Christianity. Rejecting, as we ought to, the conception of the dominion of an official church over us, we ought not in our protest to lose sight of that historical continuity of spiritual life which makes Christianity an age-long movement rather than a mere formal program. For in this spiritual inheritance which binds us by a living chain to Christian origins, we find a true inner relationship to the power of the gospel.

## I

Let us look for a little at Christianity as a continuous spiritual movement. If we once apprehend what is involved in this history which lies behind us, we shall have light thrown on the problems which are so insistent in our modern life.

The gospel is essentially a living force. And like every living force it is constantly seeking to vivify the individuals and the social institutions which it touches. It is of the very essence of the gospel to change things. It is a transforming force. The gospel is thus fundamentally opposed to the idea of conformity. It always has and always will create non-conformist movements. For the spirit of conformity is static. It is satisfied with things as they are. It exalts the standards of the past, and distrusts any prospects of change. The gospel, a living force, breaks up the dead soil of conventional habits and sends forth the flowers and the fruit of new creations.

How wonderfully this power of life was exhibited in the attitude of Jesus! The scribes were eagerly trying to set forth religion in its perfection by reducing it to a detailed and complete system of specific rules and regulations. They, like the modern scribes, insisted that all religious life should be regulated by a sacred book. This book, for example, required men to keep the Sabbath holy, to refrain from all labor on that day. So the scribes watched Jesus to see whether he perfectly fulfilled these requirements of religion. Would he or would he not refrain from activity on the Sabbath? But Jesus, embodying the spirit of the gospel, asked a very different question: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath

day to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" Not conformity to conventional precepts, but eagerness to save human life is the spirit of the gospel.

We glory in the fact that Jesus changed things. But we often fail to understand just what was the change which he effected. He did not formally abrogate the scribes' law code and put in its place a new law. What he did was far more important. He compelled his followers to think supremely of spiritual life rather than of legal precepts. Any rules which are made must always be subjected to the test of their effectiveness in producing a Christlike life. So far as they do this, they are good. So far as they become ends in themselves, they are bad. Fasting is entirely out of place when people are naturally and wholesomely happy. To fast when one is really happy would be hypocrisy. But the time comes when sorrow is an honest sentiment. Then fasting is a truthful expression of life. Mere conformity always leads to hypocrisy. Jesus bade his followers think of the needs of living men first, and to organize their religion to serve those needs. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The apostle Paul was filled with the power of this gospel. It was that power which changed him from a conformist Pharisee to a daring innovator. When we consider how strong are the conservative forces in religion, it fills us with amazement that he was able so completely to release Christianity from bondage to the Jewish law. What a change was here involved! There was the rite of circumcision, commanded again and again in Paul's Bible. Jesus had been circumcised, and had never so much as

intimated that it might be abandoned. Yet in the face of Biblical commandments and of the example of Jesus himself, Paul insisted that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature in Christ Jesus."

As we look back on this epoch-making achievement of Paul, how we rejoice in the emancipating power of the gospel! For it made it possible for us Gentiles to be Christians in a straightforward way instead of having to conform first to a Jewish ritual. It opened the way for the Christianization of the world.

Now if we read our New Testament aright, we shall treasure these and other revelations of the living power of the gospel. We shall see that to use the New Testament as if it were a scribes' book of precepts is utterly to miss its real message. We shall learn that early Christianity was something far vaster than a collection of teachings, wonderful as those teachings are. It was a *life,* a life-giving spirit, a conquering spiritual movement, ever eager to bring men under the transforming power of Christ.

## II

But this power of the gospel did not cease with New Testament times. Men and women who had been transformed by Christ became creative centers of transformation wherever they were. And before very long a great ferment was at work in the mighty Roman Empire. Christian men could not be content that the world in which they and their followers must live should remain permanently under non-Christian influences. The life of the gospel began to disintegrate the soil of paganism, that the

tree of life might flourish. There is no more wonderful story in history than the tale of the gradual transformation of the Roman Empire into the Christendom of Europe.

It is worth our while to notice just what took place. Exactly as the power of the gospel in the apostolic work of Paul meant a changed kind of religion to meet a new need, so the Christianization of the Greco-Roman world meant a transformation of Christianity. Dr. Edwin Hatch, in his famous Hibbert Lectures, called attention in striking terms to the difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed. The first breathes the atmosphere of a world of Syrian peasants. The latter reveals the sophistication of minds trained in the intricacies of Hellenistic philosophical speculation. The language of the Nicene Creed is not scriptural. The theological problem which it defines is not a problem of early Christian thinking. It belongs to a new world, the world of Greek culture.

Impressed by this extraordinary contrast between the religious ideas of the New Testament and those of the Nicene period, some Christian scholars have portrayed the development as the "Hellenization of Christianity," and have depreciated the theology of the third and fourth centuries in contrast to the ideals of the New Testament. But the process is quite as truly the "Christianization of Hellenism" as it is the "Hellenization of Christianity." When we look back at the situation in those early centuries and realize how various forms of non-Christian philosophy were contending earnestly for the mastery of men's thinking, is it not a cause for rejoicing that the power of the gospel was so great as to lead men like Origen to consecrate all their learning

to the task of establishing a *Christian* philosophy which should be intellectually superior to any non-Christian rivals?

Now from the point of view of a conformist, the theology of the Nicene period was "modernism." It was not content with Biblical ideas, but insisted on introducing new terms and new conceptions. The Arians accused the Athanasian party of not employing Biblical terms in their doctrines. Indeed the keyword of the Nicene Creed—*homoousios*—is not a New Testament word. It comes directly from Hellenistic sources. Yet subsequent Christian sentiment has gratefully acknowledged the service rendered by these theological innovators. They made it possible for the world of Hellenic thought to become the agent of the gospel instead of remaining hostile to it. They laid the foundations of a religious culture which, during the Middle Ages, preserved for us the treasures of Greek and Latin literature and made them accessible for the education of countless generations of youth. They made Christianity the greatest intellectual power in the world as it was already the greatest moral power. They began the work which has steadily grown through the centuries until we now confidently look forward to the conquest of other cultures and other literatures by the power of the gospel, and to the ultimate establishment of a Christian world. The gospel was a transforming power. It transformed not only pagan culture, but none the less the ideas and the practises of Christians themselves. The Christianity of the Hellenistic world was strikingly different from the Christianity of the early Christians. But the difference is a testimony to the transforming and enlarging power of the gospel.

The Protestant Reformation is another epoch in the history of Christianity. What brought it about? Nothing less than the power of the gospel. Luther had to deny the official authority of the church, purely and simply because the church was not transmitting the power of the gospel. He never intended at first to separate from the Roman Church. He was still a good Catholic when he posted his ninety-five theses. But when the church obstructed the power of the gospel, Luther became an innovator. The daring freshness of his early proclamations contrasts strongly with the conformist spirit of later Lutheranism. In them we feel the moving of a mighty spirit. And this spirit has gone on in the history of Protestantism, creating what seems to the Romanist to be an utter chaos of discord. In the eyes of the genuine Protestant, however, the story of the emergence of denominations and dissenting movements is the record of a growing soul-liberty in the face of officialism and conventionalism. We glory in the Protestant movement, and rightly. But it was none the less a profound transformation of Christianity.

So too, we Baptists glory in the daring of the great souls who dared to stand out in protest against the enslaving practises of existing churches. How radical the Anabaptists seemed to their contemporaries! To separate Church from State, to abolish infant baptism, to insist on a regenerate church-membership—these were indefensible innovations in the eyes of sixteenth century churchmen. But they were justified in the judgment of our forefathers and are being increasingly justified by the judgment of fair-minded historians because they released the power of the gospel.

## III

What, now, is the result of thus considering Christianity as a historical movement rather than as a statutory system?

The historical fact is that the gospel has inspired many different forms of thought and of practise. Truth compels us to recognize that Christianity is broader than any formulation of faith, and more flexible than any organization. We Baptists have always insisted on this in our refusal to identify salvation with technical church-membership.

But the message of history is especially imperative in another direction. If we now glory in the innovations introduced by Jesus, by Paul, by the Nicene theologians, by the early Protestant Reformers, by our own Baptist forefathers, why should we suddenly be afraid of innovations in our own day? The power of the gospel is creating such innovations among us no less surely than it did in days of yore.

For we are literally living in a new world as contrasted with the world of a century ago. Exactly as early Christianity faced a world new to it, and by entering into cordial relations with all that was good in Hellenistic culture conquered that world of culture, so our Christianity is facing a new world, which must either be Christianized or remain a formidable enemy to the gospel. That ancient world was Christianized because men filled with the power of the gospel asked what living men needed rather than what was commanded in conventional theology. The modern world will be Christianized only if we shall be so filled with the power of the gospel that our circumcisions and un-

circumcisions shall all be subordinated to a great spiritual purpose and a great consciousness of a divine mission. If, as has been done by many earnest Christian men, the doctrine of evolution is so interpreted that a Christian can take his place among the scholars of today, is this not vastly better than to condemn the doctrine just because it is not taught in Scripture? If, for the sake of a vital Christianity for the Gentile world of the first century, Paul modified the previously existing opinion concerning the binding character of the rite of circumcision, may not modern men with the spirit of Paul modify previously existing opinion as to the manner in which the world and living species came into existence, if by such modification men may be brought more directly into touch with the transforming power of Christ? Indeed, is not the Christian interpretation of the conceptions of modern science as desirable for our age as was the Christian interpretation of Hellenistic philosophy for the third century? The power of the gospel in the hearts of men of science today is leading them to think out the meaning of Christian loyalty in terms which will enable them, as scientists, to be true both to scientific demands and to Christian principles. We ought to encourage such men instead of casting suspicion on their efforts.

But the most notable exhibition of the power of the gospel just now is the great awakening which has seized all Protestant Christianity. We Baptists have named our share of it the "New World Movement." The keynote of that movement is its missionary purpose. More and more Christians of our day are feeling keenly that a Christianity which is content merely to accept and enjoy the spiritual

values which have been already wrought out by previous generations is too complacent to expect the blessing of God. The great question which we must face is whether we actually love the gospel enough to devote ourselves to the task of sharing it with the world. The world survey was intended to enable us to see clearly what is involved in that responsibility, and to consecrate all our powers to its accomplishment. And it is the testimony of hundreds of churches and thousands of individuals that the study of that survey during last year was a revelation of the "fundamentals" of Christian faith in persuasive form. God has led us to the threshold of a new world, a world dissatisfied with its own past, vaguely but intensely longing for a better future. God has disclosed to us in the deeds of the past the power of the gospel in similar situations in human history. An opportunity lies before us no less inspiring—and no less difficult—than that which lay before the apostle Paul. In his day there were "Judaizers" who were more concerned with conformity to traditional details than they were with the great field for a free gospel. Today we face, as did Paul, the challenge of an unparalleled opportunity. Do we believe in the power of the gospel to create appropriate means of expression in new situations? Or are we sceptical concerning anything save the interpretations with which we are familiar? Here is a real test of our faith.

To think of Christianity as a century-long historical movement will strengthen our faith. In every time of crisis there have been those who dreaded change, who identified the gospel with the forms which it had assumed in the past; but there have also been those who, like John Robinson,

looked to the future, confident that there was yet new light to break forth from the Word of God. To a timid soul it might well seem that in the vast movements of the past centuries, Christianity was in danger of being engulfed. But the power of the gospel was sufficient to secure the increasing triumph of Christianity. That power shattered the bonds of Jewish legalism, Christianized the culture and learning of the mighty Roman Empire, educated Europe from barbarism into modern civilization, emancipated the individual from the tyranny of ecclesiasticism, released the spiritual forces of the Wesleyan revival in the face of conventional suspicion, created the modern missionary movement in a church largely indifferent or hostile, and is stirring the hearts of men today with a summons which cannot be stilled.

Let us indeed rejoice that we have our New Testament to kindle and instruct our faith. But let us also rejoice that we may look back on nearly two millenniums of Christian history, in which the power of the gospel has gone from one triumph to another. And let us, with the courage engendered by this heritage, make real and living in our world the spirit of our Lord and Master and of his great apostle to the Gentile world. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

# VIII

# THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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# THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

THE Great War is over, and the great work now begins. The object of war is destruction, and surely the destruction has been abundant and complete. The monstrous German ambition lies broken and impotent, and every church in Christendom may well sing one stanza of the *Magnificat:* "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart; He hath put down princes from their thrones, and exalted them of low degree."

The Great War has not yet brought us peace or happiness, but it has brought us amazing opportunity. Fused in the fires of the awful struggle, the whole world now lies plastic to the hand of faith. The foundations of the great deep are broken up, barriers are broken, boundaries are shattered, and the whole world is malleable and waiting to be shaped anew. When Charles Francis Adams calls a certain age in Massachusetts history "the glacial period" we all know what he means. Human life was congealed by the New England theocracy—all truth was known, all duty expounded, and nothing allowed to change. But the era in which we live is not glacial, but volcanic. All human governments, institutions, and ideals are changing before our very eyes. The world is a molten mass, and before it cools Christianity may stamp upon it the image and superscription of God. Twenty years from now it will be impossible; five years from

now it will be too late. This one year will shape the thousand years that follow after. As we face our tremendous task, we may take either the attitude of Shakespeare's Hamlet or that of the English poet who died on his way to the front, Rupert Brooke. The nerveless Hamlet moaned:

> The time is out of joint: O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right!

But the militant soul of Rupert Brooke cried, as he sailed for Gallipoli,

> Now God be thanked, who hath matched us with his hour!

In all the changes now going on the Christian church is vitally concerned. If it could not prevent the war, it can at least prevent an ignoble and unchristian peace. The church has immense responsibility for the social conditions which shape the individual life. It must refuse to condone or tolerate conditions which make religion impossible. Protestantism represents the extreme of emphasis upon the individual. We believe that "the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." We believe the world will never be saved by social reform, by hygiene, by soup-kitchens, or modern plumbing. It will be saved only as individuals are saved, i. e., transformed in purpose and allegiance and made partakers of the divine nature.

But as no man can breathe in a vacuum, no man can long remain Christian if all his surroundings are antichristian and his whole environment is a denial of the possibility of a Christian order on the earth. An antichristian society will poison and suffocate the individual Christian man. We need not only good men, but good relations between men,

and without such relations the isolated individual Christian will shrivel up and cease to be. Hence the Christian church has a vital concern with reconstruction of the social order. What can the church do today as it stands between the shattered world of 1914 and the Christian world that is to be? It cannot pose as an authority in sociology or economics. It should not rush in where experts fear to tread. It cannot offer competent opinions on municipal government, or taxation, or social insurance, or the exact number of hours a man ought to work in a day, or the amount of wages he ought to receive. But of certain things the church is absolutely sure, and on these it must speak in trumpet tones.

1. *The church can and must affirm the sacredness of personality.* A person is not a thing to be bought and sold, used and flung aside, exploited for another's gain. A person is not a means to anything, but an end in himself. He is never a tool or a "hand," but is a spark of the divine and eternal. In three consecutive stories Jesus set forth his conception of the human being—the stories of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son. The lost coin was still precious metal, the lost sheep still dear to the shepherd, the lost son still a son and heir to all the father possessed.

Hence a contract for labor is wholly different from a contract for goods. The goods can be detached from the owner and shipped across the sea. Labor cannot be detached from the soul of the laborer, and his soul cannot become an article of commerce. Cotton can be baled and shipped and bought and sold, but the human beings who pick the cotton, or weave it into fabrics, or handle it over the

counter, are not in the same category. They are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; they have a value which attaches to no property, and they have rights superior to all property rights whatever. In affirming the sacredness of persons the church is not posing as expert economist; it is uttering the first rudiments of religion.

Hence labor that degrades and stunts the personality cannot be tolerated in a Christian land. Labor cannot indeed be always agreeable. Work is not play, and religion is not afraid of hard work. Honest work is not a curse, but an education. It means burden-bearing, strenuous, unremitting effort, heroic overcoming of obstacles. Let no Utopian dream, whether painted by evangelism or bolshevism, hide from us the grim reality. Some men must dig our ditches through the rocks and mud, and mine our coal in the sunless depths of the earth, and breathe the hot air of the factory, and make sulphur matches, and feed the blazing fires in the hold of the ocean liner. Some women must scrub prosaic floors and wash dishes and mend torn garments, and do the daily drudgery which is the price of a home. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"—no mass-meetings or street orators can reverse that sentence. This is not an easy world, and was not meant to be.

But the toil of the home need not crush out the soul of womanhood, and the toil of the farm and the factory need not crush the aspiration of manhood. Toil that undermines health, that permanently saps nervous energy, toil that is aimless and hopeless because it sees no outcome, toil that has no satisfaction in the process and no share in the result—that is antichristian toil and must not be allowed

in a Christian land. From the standpoint of mere production that kind of work is wasteful, since it means lessened output reluctantly yielded by sullen workers. But from the standpoint of religion that kind of work is condemned as dwarfing to the souls of men.

The church has a stake in creating such conditions that men may not only become Christian, but may stay Christian. What is the use of adding a thousand converts to our churches if we must turn them loose in a world where the Christian life is practically impossible? What is the use of getting them to walk a "sawdust trail" if the next day and the next ten years they must walk streets filled with saloons and prostitutes and vampires? What do they gain in accepting religion on Sunday night, if on Monday they must accept a civilization which scouts the life of the Nazarene and is built on the principle of each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost? If the church in the presence of such conditions is silent or evasive, then the moral passion of our time will throb through other channels and the lovers of men will seek unconsecrated pulpits for their message.

2. *The church must affirm democracy,* i. e., *equal opportunity for all persons to develop their highest powers.* Of course, all men are not born equal—that is the flashing phrase found in the Declaration of Independence, nowhere found in the New Testament. Persons are not equal in capacity or attainment, and never can be. Men are no more alike in their ability to imagine, administer, and create than they are in the color of their eyes and hair. Men are not bricks in a row, each one eight inches by two by four; they are members in a social body.

But each member must participate in the life of the whole body, and if shut out of that life it will make trouble for all the rest. A little finger left to fester in pain will send pain through every limb and at length still the beating of the central heart. That the whole body is crippled when a single member is left to suffer and to die, is true of the body politic as of the physical organism.

If the church be truly democratic it will not endorse the social domination of any class, whether it be a class of radicals and revolutionists or a class of Bourbons and reactionaries. Russia today is the most undemocratic land in the world. Professing lofty sentiments of brotherhood, it is given over to dastardly deeds intended to enthrone in power a single class. Russia was ruled for centuries by a class of royal tyrants and now it is ruled by a proletariat, and one kind of rule is as dangerous as the other. On the whole I would prefer the tyranny of a single autocrat to the tyranny of the hydra-headed mob.

Germany has been ruled for fifty years by a Junker-class who determined on world power or downfall, and they have obtained downfall forever. But if the power of the Junkers is merely transferred to another class—the men who work with their hands—nothing will be gained for freedom or for Christian faith. Class rule is always blind and hateful. Christianity knows no class and will submit to none. Barbarian and Scythian, Gentile and Jew, Oriental and Occidental, employer and employed, brain-worker and hand-worker—all are human beings bound by the same law, needing the same gospel, called to stand at last before the same inflexible tribunal.

The remedy for the rule of the tyrant and the rule of the mob is to be found in the simple, far-reaching principles of Christian democracy. That democracy must prevail in the church, in political life, in business life, and in the entire social order. Democracy does not mean that one man is as good as another, but that all men are good enough to have a voice in choosing the best. It does not mean that all are equally wise, but that all are wise enough to help in discovering the wisest and letting him lead the way. Democracy is clumsy, but Christian autocracy is smooth running, but sure in the end to run upon the rocks. Some one has said that autocracy is like a swift ship, beautiful to see until it strikes and founders on a ledge; while democracy is like sailing on a raft—your feet are always uncomfortably wet but your craft cannot sink. But whether comfortable or not, democracy is the only social order that is compatible with the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith.

3. *The church must affirm that the law of love is a law of nature as well as a law of God,* and is not to be subordinated to any laws of biology or economics. The Great War has made some long-hidden truths to stand out sharp and clear, as invisible ink when brought near the fire. It has shown us side by side, in deadly parallels, the Germanic and the Christian theory of life. Germany has for two generations been nominally Christian; but her leaders have worshiped Odin and Thor, canonized the Vikings, and bowed at the shrine of physical force. They have employed her philosophers and preachers to buttress and sanctify their pagan ambition. And they have performed their task so thoroughly that the whole world can now see the amazing contrast

between a materialistic, or pagan, and a human and Christian order of society.

Kaiserism says the fundamental law of the world is competition. Christianity says the fundamental law is cooperation. Kaiserism says war is a biological necessity; Christianity says brotherhood is a necessity for the survival of men and tribes and nations. Kaiserism declares the state is the source of law and whatever it commands is right; Christianity affirms that the state is subject to the law whose seat is in the bosom of God, and only what is right may the state command. Nietzsche declares that "life is in its essence injury, the overpowering of whatever is foreign to us." Christianity declares that whosoever wills to save his life shall lose it. In Von Moltke we read: "Perpetual peace is a dream, and it is not even a beautiful dream. War is part of the eternal order instituted by God." In the New Testament we read that the peace-makers are the true children of God.

We in America have never yet consciously put biological law above ethical obligation. But we are in constant danger of fatalistic surrender to supposed economic laws formulated by thinkers long since dead. We sometimes say, "There is no escape from the iron law of supply and demand," when as a matter of fact one of our chief tasks in life is to prevent the mechanical play of blind economic forces. We say, "Men can always be depended on to act selfishly," and as we say it the men in khaki go marching down the street to disprove our pagan theory. We say, "Strong men must triumph and the weak must always go to the wall," but every Christian orphanage and hospital and school is built to combat our assertion. We say, "Salaries and

wages go up and down according to the number of men standing idle," and every combination of capital or of labor is designed to defeat that automatic process.

Christianity cannot recognize industrial war as the future basis of society. That kind of war is today advocated by two classes: those that have desperately failed and gone under in the social struggle and so think any change must be for the better, and those who have completely succeeded in the struggle and who will welcome no change in a social order which has made them prosperous. But a society built on industrial antagonism is a pyramid standing on its apex, already toppling into ruin. The laboring man who regards all employers as his natural foes is blind to the facts as they are, is a poor helper in any enterprise, and is, himself, the foe of industrial peace. The employer who regards all laboring men with suspicion and fear is not fitted to function in a Christian society and is a menace to the state. A society built up of two classes—one trying to get much labor for little money and the other trying to give little labor for much money—such a non-cooperative and inhuman society carries in itself a slumbering revolution and cannot long endure. When those two classes engage in public brawls it is the great community around them, made up of millions of innocent men and women, which suffers most.

Is the industry of today really based on fear rather than on faith? Is not the employer in constant dread of secret organizations, new demands, of "soldiering" on the job, or strike and desertion? And is not the employee in constant fear of losing his place, of losing his home through eviction, of

losing all opportunity in a crowded mass of struggling men? And can a civilization built on mutual fear be successful in producing either goods or men?

The church does not know enough to serve as arbitrator in specific troubles. But it does know and must say that until the motive of suspicion is replaced by mutual confidence, until industry is based not on fear but on faith and respect, there is no peace and no progress. Fear is weakening and demoralizing, and every industry which uses fear of poverty or sickness or social stigma or any kind of fear as its main motive will prove financially disappointing and socially dangerous. That leads us to our fourth principle:

4. *The church must affirm that all honest enterprise is a partnership, in which all men should work with common purpose, common responsibility, and common share in the result.* Seventy-five years ago private business was usually and obviously such a partnership. The shoemaker sat in his little old-fashioned shop with his apprentice beside him, and together they made a pair of shoes for the neighbor who bought them. The whole process was shot through with personal regard and friendly service. Now the shoemaker employs a thousand "hands" and sits behind a glass door—and glass is a non-conductor. Neither side knows how the other half thinks and does not try to know. Yet until each side knows what the other thinks and why it thinks so, we shall have not honorable partnership but dishonorable and impoverishing warfare.

This modern impersonal, mechanical relation must be swept away by the incoming of a genuine desire for partnership and a resolute determination by all parties to establish it. We had that partner-

ship in war. Our millions of soldiers flamed with a common purpose, and they realized that the officers shared their purpose with them. If millions could organize so effectively for destruction in war, can they not do it for construction in peace? If they could combine to annihilate the farm and the factory and the cathedral, can they not combine to till the farm and operate the factory and make the house of God the gate of heaven? They can—they will! All we need is eyes to see the absolute necessity for doing it, and united resolve that it shall be done.

We must Christianize the process as well as the product of industry. We must give fuller, freer, finer life to all who work beside us, on whichever side of the glass door they sit. We must give that fuller life not out of benevolence, but out of justice; not as "welfare work," but as one of the costs of production. We must lift up the standards of housing, schooling, living. We must prevent the depletion of health, the exhaustion of energy, the strain and tension of fear, and must make the health and happiness of the workers the first charge upon all productive industry.

Does that seem mere Utopian idealism? Is it so visionary that we can easily put it aside, as we put aside the Sermon on the Mount when we leave the church on Sunday noon? Listen then to the utterance of one who can hardly be called a visionary—Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In his notable pamphlet, called "Representation in Industry," he writes:

> The soundest industrial policy is that which has constantly in mind the welfare of employees as well as the making of profits and which, when human considerations demand it,

**subordinates profits to welfare. Industrial relations are essentially human relations.**

**The day has passed when the conception of industry as chiefly a revenue-producing process can be maintained. To cling to such conceptions is only to arouse antagonisms and to court trouble. In the light of the present every thoughtful man must concede that the purpose of industry is quite as much the advancement of social well-being as the accumulation of wealth.**

Closely associated with Mr. Rockefeller is W. L. MacKenzie King, former Minister of Labor in Canada, who in his remarkable book, "Industry and Humanity," declares, "Whenever in social or industrial relations the claims of humanity and industry are opposed, those of industry must make way." When experienced, hard-headed leaders of business talk in such accents surely a new day is dawning. Surely fear shall give way to faith, antagonism to cooperation, and the warfare that now cripples the work of the world shall give way to a partnership that will not only increase our output but ennoble every worker with hand or brain. Suspicious employers and sullen workers will conduct our nation into bolshevism. Loyal cooperation by men who believe their daily task is helping to make America a finer land to live in, may yet transform the place of merchandise into the Father's house.

If we agree on the four fundamental principles thus laid down, what shall we do about them? Shall the church proceed to endorse a multitude of specific measures? Shall we advocate social insurance, or profit-sharing, or a minimum wage, or an eight-hour day for every worker in shop and store and household service? Frankly, I do not believe the church knows enough to outline a detailed and rigid program and lay down the rails on which the world

must run. I am dubious about all get-the-millennium-quick schemes and all iron-clad programs for the future. If we keep open minds and warm hearts, we shall see the next step to take, and then the next, and so we shall walk together into God's great tomorrow. Let us cling to fundamental Christian principles, and through mutual conference and cooperation work them out. We do not know enough to be as dogmatic in industry as we have been in theology.

But we do know and must affirm that in a Christian land women and children cannot be sacrificed to any alleged necessities of trade. We do know that no unsanitary tenements can be allowed to exist for the enrichment of absentees. We do know that no occupational disease must go without a remedy. We do know that no preacher can rightly speak to us of golden streets if he has no care for the streets and alleys of his own city, and no church can be allowed to substitute a picture of "the sweet bye and bye" for an honest grappling with the human problems of now and here.

Great changes are coming either through the church or in spite of it. We live in a moving world, and Christian men are not afraid to have it move. Either by the orderly processes of growth, by the give and take of reasonable men, by negotiation and concession in the presence of a common need, or else by volcanic eruption and upheaval changes must come. Alas for those—whether demagogues or Bourbons—who cry "Peace, peace!" while they sow the dragon's teeth and ignore the sure crop of armed men. America has no sympathy with anarchy. Revolution is foreign to our temperament and not to be endured in a free land over which floats

the Stars and Stripes. But we must not imagine either that the "old-time religion" is good enough or that the social *status quo* is the kingdom of heaven. The things that are wrong have got to be righted by Christian men or they will be righted by antichristian forces. The open mind must come before the helping hand. The rigid stand-pat attitude of the House of Have and the sullen walking-delegate attitude of the House of Want are equally dangerous to Christian democracy. We are members one of another. The fact of membership exists whether we have the feeling of it or not. The method of the New Testament is not volcanic, but evolutionary. Every Christian accepts Christ's fundamental law of the kingdom—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn on the ear." Let every man make his own heart Christian, his own home, his own shop, his own corporation, and before we know it we shall have a Christian America, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and more glorious than an army with banners.

These principles have obvious application to the attitude of one denomination toward cooperation with other denominations just as highly honored of God and men as itself. Few of us advocate organic union of all the churches. Such a "melting-pot" would not advance the kingdom of God. But an overwhelming sentiment demands that we find some way of working, side by side and hand in hand, with all who profess and call themselves Christians. We must either cooperate or lose our most forward-looking men. If we shut all others out from our plans, we shut ourselves in, and our plans become so provincial as to be insignificant. With no surrender of our great heritage or our inner convic-

tion, we can and must find a way of Christian co-operation with the "holy church throughout all the world," or we shall lose the vision of Christ and lose the allegiance of the finest spirits now among us.

We have little time, perhaps no need, to show how this social reconstruction must affect international relations. The world is now so woven together that no nation can reorganize its life alone. Diseases, physical or social, will not stay in bounds. "Spanish influenza" quickly spreads to American shores, and fantastic Russian theories are preached in American parlors. International relations must undergo reconstruction and the process is going on before our eyes. Narrow, superheated nationalism —quite unknown in the Roman Empire or in the Middle Ages—which has developed so fiercely in the last half-century, the determination that one's own land shall dominate all other lands, is a Germanic doctrine drawn from the Old Testament and quite foreign to the New Testament.

It is easy to be provincial in a large country. In Switzerland one cannot travel three hundred miles in any direction without meeting a new language and a new culture. Here we can travel three thousand miles and find men dressed in the same garb, speaking in the same accents, and thinking the same thoughts. But the Christian church was international in its original conception, and our great task is to make the original horizon of the Church to become the horizon of the State.

A League of Nations?—yes, but what sort of nations? No league of purely selfish nations can endure. If each nation wants the shelter of the league in order to secure international sanction for nationalistic pillage, or to protect its imperialistic

ambitions, the league is dead before it is born. Only the give and take of honorable peoples, only the honest desire to help the struggling masses of humanity, white and black and yellow—only these Christian purposes can give permanence to any league. No machinery will do it. No exchange of documents can pledge a people to do a thing they desire not to do. There is no promise of peace on earth except to men of good-will. Christianity can furnish the good-will, the dynamic behind the league, and so change the treaty from a scrap of paper to an instrument of the kingdom of God. We want not merely peace, but cooperation; not cessation of struggle, but united struggle against tyranny and ignorance and poverty and sickness and despair. We want not a false internationalism which would wipe out all boundaries and destroy all local allegiance; we want the true internationalism which binds north and south and east and west in ceaseless endeavor to make the whole world free from terror and joyous in the cooperative tasks of the new day.

Science cannot do this—it can create engines of torture as easily as tools of labor. It brings men's bodies together, but cannot unite their souls. Diplomacy cannot do this—it has been more Machiavellian than Christian. Treaties cannot do this unless behind them is the confidence of faith.

When the Son of Man cometh does he find faith on the earth? Surely he has come again in the last few years. "He is sifting out the nations before his judgment-seat. Our God is marching on." Are we ready to march with him? Are we merely mourning over a vanished yesterday, merely apprehensive over an unknown tomorrow? Let Marshal

Foch, who knows both how to fight and how to pray, be our teacher at this hour. He has said: "Victories are won by science, but also by faith. It was our admirable soldiers that did it. I have but one merit—that of never despairing."

# IX

# CHRISTIANITY AND BUSINESS

GEORGE W. COLEMAN
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# CHRISTIANITY AND BUSINESS

A VERY able Christian minister, widely known, has challenged us with the startling question, "Can Christianity tolerate the church?" Even in the light of such a flaring torch it would be very difficult to discover any fundamental relationship between genuine Christianity and modern business. It is much easier to think of these two dynamic forces as locked up in separate, water-tight compartments, Christianity bravely located in the peak of the vessel of life and business safely ensconced in the stern, separated from each other as far as possible.

It is often pointed out that Christianity has not failed for the simple reason that it has never been tried. Certain it is, at any rate, that Christianity has seldom been tried in business on a large enough scale and for a sufficient length of time to have attracted any great attention.

In attempting to summon a living witness to illustrate a possible harmony, if not unity, between Christianity and business, one's mind will inevitably revert to some prosperous, benevolent, fair-dealing Christian merchant or manufacturer. No doubt he pays his bills promptly, deals justly with his customers, and is considerate in his personal relations with his employees. But is that Christianity? A very good beginning, doubtless, but does it go far enough?

A slaveholder might be a kind and honest master,

but those virtues could hardly be stretched sufficiently to provide a Christian garment that would cover up slavery.

All the personal Christian virtues exercised by the individual man of business are not sufficient to whitewash the evils inherent in a method of life that idolizes unrestrained competition, puts a premium on selfishness, recognizes no human relationships, covets the things of others, puts profits first, rewards the strong, obliterates the weak, exalts the cunning one, abases the ingenuous, feeds the grasping one, and starves those who would be generous. Whatever we may think of an institution that is founded and sustained on these ideas, we cannot very well call it Christian. It certainly is successful according to our standards of success. It is no doubt powerful. It is tremendously satisfying, temporarily at least, judging by the numbers and the kind of those who seek its favors. Business is all this and more besides, but it is not Christian—not yet, although there is hope. It is no respecter of persons; all who are fit are worthy—unfitness is the only sin. You may be saintly or vicious, self-centered or public-spirited, patriotic or treasonable, a blessing or a curse to your day and generation. These things have no necessary relationship to your success as a business man. Can you play the game? —that is the *sine qua non.*

Judged by the Sermon on the Mount our churches are a very long way from Christianity. So is business. But business is even farther from Christianity than are the churches, for this simple reason: The church continually preaches the Sermon on the Mount, even though it follows afar off. The fact remains, however, that it is headed that way. Busi-

ness, on the other hand, has never until lately heard of the Sermon on the Mount and has traveled for ages straight ahead in the opposite direction.

Admitting then at the very start that the institution of business professedly follows the rule of gold while Christianity professedly follows the Golden Rule, we can understand that one or the other must be converted to a different way of life before there can be any real harmony between the two. The legal maxim *Caveat emptor,* "Let the buyer beware," is in itself a sufficient testimony as to what has been the spirit and nature of business transactions all down the past.

Having faithfully and frankly faced the situation as it has been during this intensely commercialized age, I am the more eager and anxious to set forth the great changes which are now in process in the business world. For a long time business has been under a conviction of sin. There are genuine signs of a great repentance. And one can draw many illustrations from the world of business activities indicating a complete right-about-face.

Business is seeing a great new light. We all used to chuckle over the commercial axiom, "Everybody for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." Now business men themselves are seeing that when everybody is out for himself, the devil is more than likely to *get the foremost.* It is not alone the inner workings of the Spirit that is bringing the business man to this new point of view. The great white light of economic distress and uncertainty is shining fiercely and full in his face. Christian ideals are calling business to a new and better way of life, while economic injustice and industrial unrest are driving business to destruction. Business men are

being forced into the position where they dare not continue business in the old, "public-be-damned" sort of way. They would like to find out how they may do business for the good of all concerned.

When business is run on Christian principles, affording justice and mercy to all concerned—owners, managers, workers, and the public—we shall have done away with more than half of all the evils that afflict modern civilization and shall be in the most favorable position to address ourselves to the remaining troubles. And the application of Jesus' teachings to race questions and international affairs will enable us to finish the task. But until we Christianize business we shall make but poor headway in solving world problems.

What is meant by Christianizing business? It would take a book of large proportions to tell it all. The late Walter Rauschenbusch, in his remarkable book, "Christianizing the Social Order," throws a flood of light upon this question. But it can all be put in a very few words as well. Indeed, Amos R. Wells, editor of *The Christian Endeavor World,* has compressed it into twenty-eight words and thirty-five syllables. Here it is:

> What men want is the certainty that every man willing to work shall get a chance to work, and get for himself the full results of his work.

There is no impractical idealism in a standard like that. But that is what men want, and that is what Christianity or any other religion worthy of the name wants men to have.

Note, please, that it is the *certainty* of a chance to work that men want; no panic, strike, lockout, dismissal, spree, whim, manipulation, combine,

trust, or speculation to prevent it. How can business built on a cutthroat, competitive basis give men any such assurance as that? It is impossible. The state will protect the lives of its citizens, but there is no one to protect their chance to make a living. Of what use is one's life without a living to sustain it? If there is no chance to work anywhere, who cares? Who is responsible? There are hospitals for the sick, poor-houses for the indigent, homes for the aged; but nothing but despair for the unemployed. Business washes its hands of the matter. The State turns its back upon the problem. The Church is impotent.

And observe again, it is *every man* who wants a chance to work—ditcher, kitchen-maid, college president, fireman, bank director, farmer, lawyer, middleman, breaker-boy, manufacturer, artist, reporter, street-cleaner, laundress. Under the present crazy system of business there may be a glut of one product and a dearth in another, overproduction at one time all along the line and stagnation at another time in every industry. There is such a maladjustment of seasonal occupations that men and women are overworked a part of the year and left to idleness the remainder of the time. Men and women choose their occupations with little or no idea as to what the needs are in that calling. Everything is haphazard, all following blindly the little god of supply and demand, subjecting prosperity and happiness and even life itself to his slightest whims. Business worships at his shrine, so there is no help in that quarter. The State and the Church are likewise votaries at the same altar. Some few are beginning to see that supply and demand can be regulated, directed, harnessed like the forces of nature.

But the most vital factor in Mr. Wells' wonderfully simple recipe for Christianizing business is that men shall get the *full results* of their work. Aye, there's the rub! Granted, for the sake of the argument, that there is the best intention in the world to give men the full results of their labor, how are those results to be measured? When fifty persons have to do with the making of a pair of shoes and they use machines that are leased, in a building that is rented, and employ capital that is borrowed, and depend on buyers of raw material, sellers of the finished product, accountants and managers, for the final success of their labors, what is their right and proper share when the net result *is* successful, and what is it when the net result *is not* successful? It is not so easy to reckon as when the cobbler, in his own shop with his own leather and tools, makes a pair of custom-made boots for his own customer. He gets the full results of his labor, and yet he may be less well off in dollars and cents than his brother who works in the shoe factory.

There is only one answer to this vital conundrum. Cooperative production must be accompanied by cooperative management, and the results must be shared under a mutual understanding. Autocratic control and autocratic assignment of rewards mean either the complete subserviency of the workers or constant warfare between them and their employers. Neither of these conditions is Christian, and their death-knell is already sounding.

But the conversion of business to the Christian life is as great a miracle as regeneration in the life of an individual. And unless we realize that institutions as well as people must become Christian,

our hope of the kingdom of Heaven on earth is utterly vain. And when we recall the process of growing in grace on the part of an individual who has turned from darkness to light and how he always is a long way short of the full stature of godliness, we shall be patient and tolerant with the still slower process by which an institution is regenerated. In our dealings with twelve million black people in this country we have constantly before our eyes a vivid illustration of this truth. Although the abolition of slavery in this country was accomplished nearly two generations ago, our treatment of the colored race, both in the North and in the South, falls far short of our Christian ideals.

But the conversion of business is proceeding rapidly in spite of the magnitude of the task. It was more than twenty years ago when the civic conscience of the country began to cry out against soulless corporations, pernicious rebating, tariff-pampered industries, swollen fortunes, and gigantic trusts. Theodore Roosevelt was the preacher who called big business to repentance, and the presidential chair was his pulpit. The effect of that great revival is felt today in every shop and mine and mart throughout the country. Business men know now beyond peradventure that the standards of those days are beyond the pale. And now in this day our statesmen are puzzling their brains to find some way by which the civil authorities may prevent capital and labor from robbing and murdering the public while they engage in a life-and-death struggle or patch up a compromise peace at the expense of their customers. Schemes of state-fostered arbitration and conciliation offer some alle-

viation, but fall far short of what is needed. Thus the state is playing a part in the conversion of business.

It was hardly more than a dozen years ago that the church began to concern itself with the state of the soul of its big brother, business. The ministers of the churches were so absorbed in bringing individual sinners to repentance that they were quite neglectful of this great institutional sinner living in the same house with them. But our own lamented Walter Rauschenbusch, with his keen vision and persuasive eloquence, had but to sound the call for a campaign of social evangelization when prophets arose in all the churches, from the synagogue and cathedral to the Universalist and Unitarian communions, calling upon business and all its household to adopt a new way of life. Thus a dozen or more great leaders of the church have been working hard for nearly a decade for the salvation of the commercial, industrial, economic, and financial forces that make business what it is.

And, year after year, great denominational leaders in solemn conclave have made pronouncements concerning Christian standards in industrial, social, and economic relationships which have made their mark on the business men in these fellowships and have served notice on the business world at large that a new day is dawning when righteousness and business will walk hand in hand.

At the same time the church has set its rank and file to studying the whole situation. Missionary study classes throughout the country are taking up social and industrial questions. Their text-books are published by the tens of thousands. Large quantities of supplementary reading along these

lines are poured out by our denominational publishing societies. The next generation will tackle its business problems from an entirely different point of view because of these influences.

In still another way the church is exercising a very marked influence on business life. More than any other single agency, the church itself and church people individually have given encouragement and support to the open-forum method of public discussion of vital themes. It is in these Sunday-night gatherings, now scattered over the country in every direction, that the common people are challenging business to give an account of itself and to justify its way in the light of a Christian civilization. This is no insignificant factor in the process of regeneration that is taking place, and it is a fast growing one. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, of New York City, says that "the time is coming when in all our large city churches the forum will be considered not a whit less important than the Sunday school, and that it is the urgency of social and industrial problems which explains the rise and progress of the church forum."

Interesting and significant as are the civic and religious movements aiming at the regeneration of business, nothing is more convincing that a change is really taking place than the altered attitude and conduct of business itself. By its fruits we may judge of the presence of a new life in the old Adam of business.

In the first place, many business men who used to look upon the labor unions as their arch-enemies are now encouraging them to strengthen their organizations and to take a responsible share in the settlement of all questions affecting wages, hours,

and working conditions. Just as the individual sinner is often driven to repentance through fear of the consequences of the life he is leading, so business is also moved to adopt a better way of life through a realization of what is sure to follow continuous unbridled industrial warfare.

Some twenty years ago, manufacturers began to take an interest in the human needs of their workers, providing rest-rooms, cafeterias, medical attendance, club-rooms, and the like, in the factory buildings. Although it is now plainly seen that this so-called welfare work can easily be overdone, and is often unfortunately advertised, and can by no possible means be a substitute for just wages, it is also perfectly clear that it indicates an entirely new and wholesome change of attitude toward those who work with their hands.

Then came a great variety of profit-sharing schemes, all initiated by the employers and seeking to give the employee a fairer share of the results of his labor. Every day one hears of some new, gigantic project of this sort. Yesterday it was a great soap manufacturer, today perhaps it is a big manufacturer of automobile tires, tomorrow it is the wonderfully successful manufacturer of a world-famous camera who lays out an elaborate mechanism for giving his employees a share in the profits of the business. And during this period there have grown up in big corporations great systems of pensioning old and faithful employees—another recognition by business of the human element in industry.

In no up-to-date business is the employment and discharge of workers handled in the old-fashioned, hit-or-miss method which involved so much misfor-

tune to the workers and was so extravagantly inefficient for the owners. Now in the most modern business organization the whole matter of personal relations, not only between employer and employees, but also between individual employees, is in the hands of a highly paid expert who is a coordinate factor with the sales, production, purchase, and financial managers in the general conduct of the affairs of the concern.

And even now a widely known manufacturer is inviting his workers to select three of their number to sit as members on the board of directors to represent the interests of the employees in handling all the business of the corporation.

These are some of the more obvious indications of a right-about-face in the general attitude of business men toward the problems of management, labor, and profits. They are symptomatic of still more far-reaching changes which are now in process. We can easily discern the nature of some of these coming transformations by watching the developments of the bloodless industrial revolution which is proceeding so swiftly in England.

Although the State, the Church, and business itself have all been making contributions toward the great changes in commercial and industrial life, the World War has undoubtedly accomplished more than all other influences put together. Under the compulsion of dread necessity we have seen old-fashioned business in its true light, and have come to realize clearly that it can no longer remain a thing apart, but must become a harmonious element in a cooperative, brotherly, Christian civilization.

We have learned that it requires a highly developed and subservient business machine, as well as

a thoroughly trained and devoted army, to cope successfully with a mighty warlike enemy nation. We have seen that business, as well as the army and navy, must put the interests of the nation first, no matter what may be the cost to itself. And it is the shortest possible step from that position to a realization that business may not in times of peace conduct itself in a manner inimical to the public welfare. And anything that works injustice, deprivation, or misfortune to the worker is doing injury to a sovereign citizen who is one of the pillars upon which our whole conception of democratic life rests.

We have seen the most capable, representative business men giving themselves without money and without price during long months of personal privation to the national war work in Washington while other business men, let us believe not so representative, were swelling their fortunes by profiteering. The latter class represents old, unregenerate business. The former are the promise of the new day that is dawning in business life, when men will buy and sell, manufacture and distribute, with the same motive and inspiration that control the doctor and the teacher, the artist and the preacher. Each will strive to make the largest possible contribution to the welfare of all under a system that will automatically bring him the rewards to which he is entitled and which his fellows will gladly accord him.

When business has become Christian it will be more efficient, more secure, more powerful, and a thousand times more satisfying. It will indeed be doubly blessed, blessing those whom it serves beyond anything we have yet dreamed, and blessing

those who serve it in a way that our hearts can as yet hardly understand. And when business is redeemed, then will follow a perfectly natural solution to many of the vexed problems of civilization which now seem insuperable.

# X

# CAN A NATION BE MORAL?

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# CAN A NATION BE MORAL?

"And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace."—*Luke 19 : 41, 42.*

THIS lamentation of Jesus has no meaning if a nation has no mission. It is idle to lament a failure to perform a task never set. Of the innumerable peoples who have spawned upon the earth, many have meant little more for civilization than the animals they domesticated. But some nations were not only to exist, but to determine the conditions of other nations' existence. Any schoolboy can give their names. Among them was that nation whose failure to realize its full mission drew these words from a citizen who saw only too clearly an approaching national debacle. For the Hebrews were the trustees of a religion.

Jesus certainly recalled the hopes and prayers and heroic deeds which had gone into the history of his nation. Every day as a child he had prayed to the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. The city of David was to him the city of the great king. There it was that Nehemiah had galvanized the dying courage of unpractical idealists. There Judas Maccabæus had cleansed the polluted altar; and there Simon and John Hyrcanus had built a nation devoted to Jehovah, the God of the whole earth. Over its seizure by Rome the pious had lamented, not simply because a city had been lost, but because of the unobserved sins of prosperous rulers. There

too, Herod, that master adventurer, had spent his wealth in wall and palace and temple. Jerusalem was a monument of national hopes that had risen only to be dashed to the earth in some ever-recurring national tragedy.

And now Jesus foresaw another national collapse. Possessed, as subsequent history was to show, with the only religion capable of developing into the leaven of western civilization, it had turned from him who embodied its great mission to a war for political greatness. With the synagogues scattered over an entire empire, with One who could have made it the true servant of Jehovah by making it the servant of the world, it was turning from such ministry to hopeless rivalry with the power that had its home on the seven hills of Rome. It was untrue to its national mission.

It is easy to imagine how different the world might have been had the Jewish race followed the prophets and Jesus Christ. Judaism might have become a universal idealism, the temple might have become the house of prayer for all nations, the Jews might have become the very prophet of hope and social service. No other nation ever had such an opportunity. No other nation ever suffered more terribly for disclaiming its mission.

But can we say the obligation of Jerusalem was greater than that of any nation entrusted with a history which has made idealism possible? Must not any nation—must not our own nation—strive for something beyond its own political supremacy?

We have been told that there is no such ultimate good; that justice is a civic virtue stopping at the frontier; that a nation is an end in itself; that it is idle to speak of right and wrong when national ac-

tion is concerned. One might, we have been told, as well speak of the right and wrong of a biological law. The weak nation has no rights which the strong nation needs to respect, and a strong nation has no right which the weak nation must not respect. For national might is national right.

The world has denied this brutal doctrine and has placed its treasure and its youth upon the altar of its denial. We have said that a nation ought to be as moral as an individual is moral; that it must be subjected to a moral law as the individual is subjected to moral law; that the Golden Rule will apply to nations as to individuals. And, saying this, we have committed ourselves to the belief that national morality can exist and to the task of determining the conditions under which it shall exist. That task the God of history has set America as truly as Judea. We too must choose or reject a mission. Shall Jesus weep over Washington as he wept over Jerusalem?

## I

National morality is more than an abstract principle. It is easy to say that the nation must be moral as an individual is moral, but it is not easy to see that conditions exist which make national morality possible. Individuals have developed morals because they have formed communities. They have learned to live together by establishing customs and regulations intended to make such common life possible. Morality is born of *mores*—folk ways expressing folk ideals. The welfare of the community has been something to which the desires of the individual have had to be subordinated. As men have better understood their common life,

their notions of morals have expanded. The morality of savages is never as intelligent or as extended as that of more highly developed peoples. The rights of individuals have been enlarged as they have been seen to belong to all members of the community. But nations have never had any such grouping. They have been able to enforce their will upon individuals, but they have never belonged to any group superior to themselves. Alliances are not societies of nations. And therefore nations have never grasped fully the very foundation ideas of morality. For that would mean the establishment and existence of a group the individuals of which are nations.

We still hear legislators speak of our nation as if it had no obligation superior to its own welfare. They tell us its will is to be the sole arbiter of its actions. It can help or oppose other nations as it may choose. Its sovereignty is lonely autocracy.

Many of these protestations are discounted, but they are alarming because they virtually deny the moral obligation of a nation. To such leaders, as to the political philosophers of Germany, the state is an end in itself. It is therefore incapable of morality in any true sense of the word. I have no doubt that some of the opposition to the proposed League of Nations is unconsciously an expression of the belief that the United States, at least, is so powerful that it can make its own morality and should not in any sense commit itself to customs which are built up by a group of which it might become a member. Every patriot knows the thrill of such appeals. But not all patriots feel their danger. As long as they determine our national policy, all talk about national morality is dangerously near to hy-

pocrisy. For morality is not the might of the self-sufficient. Ultimately it is the expression of a group-will and is born of customs made possible by the existence of some group. Until that common will is born nations like the most primitive are without morality.

If the matter were left here, we might very well despair of any improvement of international affairs. If there is nothing better in the process of social evolution than that which has already been reached, the outlook for the future is dark. The world of tomorrow cannot safely be built out of the precedents of yesterday. National individualism means international warfare crowded with miseries we dare not picture.

But there is more in history than this triumph of a superindividual. Just as morality grew up unconsciously, instinctively, from the relations of individuals, so is it already developing in the world of nations. For nations are already beginning to establish a sort of unregulated morality. By the very force of circumstances they have been driven to a recognition of some sort of common good, violation of which even the greatest exigency does not justify. International morality is in about the same stage of development as was the morality of primitive men before the recognition of the earliest state.

International law is a stage of this growing national morality. It, of course, is not law in any literal sense, for it lacks sanction. Indeed it is hardly more than the codification of international politeness and of national shrinking from extreme license in war. But it is none the less a real beginning in the organization of international customs. The further it is developed the more will national habits

shape themselves into a real morality which shall equalize duties and responsibilities. Disappointed as we have been in the failure of efforts to complete the organization of this morality, the cheering fact is undeniable that the tragedies of war have aroused men to a keen sense of the worth of such international morality as has been developed. We loathe military terrorism; we denounce the mistreatment of civilian populations; we champion the rights of neutral states; we lament the exploitation of science in the service of death. This is a firm foundation for a better future. What is imperative today is that the Christian sentiment which is represented in the various nations should find some way of hastening this new moral progress.

We need a higher moral insight than is in evidence. We need to realize that morality cannot be successfully superimposed upon nations. Their citizenship must be pervaded by genuine idealism and must be helped to express that idealism nationally by membership in a world controlled by international customs. That is a new call to Christian statesmanship. America helped destroy the danger of a nationalism which refused to recognize a higher law than force, but such destruction is only protective. It must lead on or it will lead back. It is, of course, Christian to wish the world well, but it is more intelligently Christian to establish a world order which will make our idealism practicable. We have uttered brave words of generosity and justice. We have warned oppressing nations. We have cheered weak nations by our sympathies. But we have not yet fulfilled our true mission. The history of America is a trust for the world. The precedents we have accumulated in our dealings with weaker

peoples are a basis for new responsibilities. We must consecrate our power to a mission, or we shall grow imperialistic in commerce and in policy. The ideals we have professed we must champion. We unfortunately must still rely on armies and navies, but if we trust in our power to do our own will, we shall reenact the tragedy of Judea. With a Christ in our social life we must follow him into the world life. We who send missionaries to the heathen must be a missionary to national councils. Peace we must give, not as a world in arms has given peace, but as He gave peace who brought a new morality to a world whose spirit he had overcome. We whose ideals flamed forth in our hour of national peril must not fall to the materialism born of wealth and power. We, too, must know the day of our Lord's visitation. We who have organized our national might for a righteous war must organize our souls for the righteousness of peace.

## II

Any long-continued betterment of international relations will be impossible, however, unless nations see that existing customs must yield to better customs. Christian morality always is pioneering in fields beyond inherited morality. It is not enough merely to form international groups in which nations may find their rules. To be moral in the Christian sense is to find in customs something which demands better customs. That is plain enough in our personal experience. If we seek to give justice to each other we soon find that reforms are imperative. A true Christian is impatient with everything and anything that prolongs injuries or lacks the promise to redress them. The gospel by its very

nature breeds discontent with what seems merely good. It spurs men to establish the better. Similarly in the case of nations, Christian morality means more idealism and more giving of justice. For nations such attitudes are more difficult than for individuals. All the more need is there that the development of international habits and customs be ennobled by the morals of a nation's citizens.

A Christian public opinion is an indispensable basis for national patience and forbearance. It is idle to expect national altruism in a nation of chauvinists. Until a citizenship is sufficiently enlightened to make possible an enlightened public opinion, a state will always be at the mercy of those who know only the philosophy of force. When motives of industry and acquisition become dominant in citizens, acquisitiveness rather than justice rules the nation. Christian citizens filled with the love of Jesus must be a leaven of justice-giving if nations are ever to learn to prefer arbitration to war.

Nor does this statement amount to a mere hope. No two nations have been greater rivals than Great Britain and the United States, or subjected to greater mutual misrepresentation, or more involved in quarrels over matters which usually lead to war. But for over a century they have not fought. With all their imperfections they have felt that justice is possible between nations and that arbitration is more worthy of Christian peoples than war. The explanation of such a morality is not far to seek. It lies in a common attitude of mind. Each nation has felt the growth of the democratic spirit, and in each alike a sense of earnest religion coupled with ecclesiastical liberty has de-

veloped as in no other part of the world. True, neither nation is thoroughly Christian. The gospel of Jesus has not wholly conquered the hearts of Americans and Englishmen, but it has been sufficiently recognized to build up a public opinion that has affected national action. After all allowance has been made for economic self-interest in both nations, there yet remains the influence of the Christ. Hypocrisy there may have been, sins and mistakes we must admit, but the gospel has been a leaven that in part at least has made the two nations more ready than they otherwise would have been to arbitrate when other nations fought. Churches born of democracy, freedom sanctified by faith, leaders who dared believe war is unchristian have helped on moral understanding. Christian people make Christian nations. Christian living has been one source of Anglo-American diplomacy. If we have yet far to go we at least have found the way.

## III

Is our country to fulfil any mission other than that of greatness? Is it enough for us as individuals to do good to individuals of other nations? We have sent missionaries of our religion to all parts of the world. So had the Jews compassed the sea and land to make proselytes. We have professed our faith in the God of the world rather than in a God of America. So had the Jewish prophets taught their people to say that Jehovah was the God of nations. We have made our ideals a beacon-light for other nations. So had the Jews come to regard themselves as possessed of the only truly divine law. Yet Jesus wept because his nation had failed in the

great moment when it had been possible for it to reach its supreme mission. Must he weep over our nation as he hears its response to the calls of growing international morality?

The answer lies largely with the church of Jesus Christ. If it be selfish and overzealous for formulas and rites, it will be salt that has lost its savor in a world of great undertakings. Its task is to educate its members and through them the nation into a realization of the imperative duty to lay the foundation of a new national morality. It must universalize the spirit of justice-giving which shall be more potent in the future than has been the spirit of liberty-getting in the past.

If we believe that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, we must make it more than a gospel of rescue and social service. The constructive forces of the world must be made Christian. Individual morality must be supplemented by a social morality. Economic groups must respect the rights of other economic groups. Nations must be taught to recognize the rights of other nations. Patriotism must be hallowed by international cooperation. National success must be measured by something more lasting than balances of trade and comparisons of national armaments. Salvation is a word of relations, not of loneliness. The Christian teacher must not be content with national supremacy, he must inculcate national helpfulness. He must evangelize nationalism.

Genuine idealism is sacrificial. Primitive men laid the foundation for our morality by recognizing that there were some things they might have done when alone which they could not do when they were with others. There can be no morality without a

limitation of individual action. This is a hard enough lesson for individuals to learn; it is all but impossible in the case of nations. Since history began, war has been the court of last appeal; a nation's rights and a nation's honor have furnished the supreme justification for violence. The nations of antiquity had no religion furnishing motives for a life of sacrifice for others. It was natural that their nations should have no other ideal than that of conquest. But Christianity centers around a cross—a symbol of a sacrificial social-mindedness. To socialize the motives of Jesus is the sole hope of national altruism.

Here lies the hope of the future. We have burst the bonds that kept religion subject to the state and Christians from the full expression of the gospel message. We believe in Jesus Christ as the revealer of God, not only to individuals, but to individuals as they work together in national groups. Here is no new gospel, but a new appreciation of the gospel. Jesus Christ is not to weep over decadent nations. He is to be the Lord of lords, of democracies, and of the world. To this we pledge our best endeavors. For it we pray, and as we pray so organize our world that its nations as truly as its individuals can fulfil our Lord's directions and embody his ideals.

# XI

# CAN BAPTISTS COOPERATE?

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# CAN BAPTISTS COOPERATE?

## A Plea for Christian Cooperation

CAN Baptists, independents, separatists, non-conformists, Protestants of Protestants as they are, cooperate? Can they cooperate with one another? Can they cooperate with their fellow Christians of other denominations?

What is the situation with respect to cooperation within the denomination? Baptists appear to be finding difficulties in the way of working together. It is true that we have notable achievements to our credit as a denomination. Yet whenever we undertake a great enterprise together we find it hard to rally all our forces and concentrate them upon the common task. "Come ye out and be ye separate" is a text much honored in the observance among us. But in this day, when the forces of evil are consolidating, and demands are being made upon the Christian church greater than ever before in history, and opportunities are opening vaster than any offered to our fathers, it is imperative that Baptists should stand together and work together. Baptists must cooperate or disintegrate. They must cooperate or betray their Lord, and fail the world in the hour of its deepest need.

The first difficulty in the way of cooperation is our independency. Baptists are not singular in that in some of the sources of their power there have been discovered elements of weakness. We have not escaped the defects of our qualities. We were

informed in the report of a distinguished Committee of the Denver meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention, which received the approbation of the Convention itself, as a reason or apology for refusing even to discuss the question of organic union with other bodies of Christians, that "Baptist churches do not have organic union among themselves." If by the phrase is meant merely a reference to the independence of the local church, and the absence of any ecclesiastical authority which can impose its demands upon such a church, we may let it pass. But if it means that we have no denominational consciousness, no common spirit of fellowship or sense of unity, no means of determining or ability to put into action the denominational will, and no inclination voluntarily to subordinate our individual purposes to the purpose of the denomination as a whole, then it is not a fact of which to boast, nor to be proclaimed brazenly in public, but a weakness, rather, to be decently concealed and mourned in private. For if the statement is true in that sense we cannot plan together nor work together nor make any united impact upon the world problems that Christian men are called to solve, much less cooperate with our fellow Christians for the extension of the kingdom of God.

If so, moreover, we have neither the New Testament spirit nor program. When Paul speaks of the church, he uses the term sometimes, it is true, of the local congregation; but, for the most part, he includes the whole body of believers everywhere. And to Paul that church, composed of churches, is an organism, an organic unity, with a single dominating mind and purpose, after the analogy of the human body, with the subordination of the mem-

bers to it, and mutual cooperation among those members. Why are Baptists often so lamentably ineffective in large city communities? Because the situation calls for a common consciousness, the subordination of individual interests, a single intelligent plan, and voluntary cooperation in the execution of it, and "Baptist churches do not have organic union among themselves!" They do not have it because they have overlooked, or forgotten, or forsaken the New Testament plan. For it is evident that while there was more than one local congregation in Rome, in Ephesus, and in Jerusalem, there was only one New Testament church in a city.

If Baptists as a denomination do not have organic union among themselves, and do not desire it, they would do well to invent some unobjectionable substitute for it, and that as early as possible, in the interest of the kingdom of God to which they are committed. Independence is good if not asserted to the detriment of cooperation. To their individualism and independency Baptists should apply the injunction affixed upon the gates of Busyrane: "Be bold! Be not too bold!"

A greater difficulty, growing and not diminishing in its menace, in the way of cooperation among American Baptists of the North, is difference of doctrinal views within the denomination. Opinions to the contrary notwithstanding, theological diversities, and some of them extreme, have always existed among Baptists since their beginning. But as the necessity for working together has become more urgent and the objects of it more numerous and complex, and association has become more close, the differences have been brought to the surface and emphasized, until, in some quarters, they have

become a source of misunderstanding and even irritation, and a cause of disunion.

Are the differences of doctrinal view within the denomination sufficiently significant to hinder co-operation in the common tasks of the kingdom of God? It is true that two cannot walk together except they be agreed, but such agreement need not involve identity of conviction. Otherwise marriage, for example, would be quite impossible. There is a basis of agreement between those who love one another that lies below the level of their divergence, and it is life's noblest task to find it.

If Baptists holding diverse views of doctrine are to work together they must first clear away misunderstandings. They must resolve to understand one another. And to the fulfilment of that resolution two considerations, if kept in mind, may contribute. Voluble discussions are often the outcome of an unconscious difference in definitions. It is folly to argue while it is uncertain whether the disputants, while using the same terms, are actually talking about the same things. Again, men are more likely to agree in their affirmations than in their negations. This suggests a hopeful direction in which to look for common ground.

But if disagreement is unavoidable, it need not break the ties of Christian brotherhood. It is not necessary to minimize the significance of the differences of conviction which distinguish honest men from each other; but if they are Christian men, and love one another, and their Lord, and the world for which he died, they must persist in the attempt to find a common ground, deeper and surer than their differences, on which they can stand together and work together.

It is strange, when you consider it, the impatience of the theological adept with his fellows over what he regards as derelictions in dogma. He is likely to be more lenient by far with breaches of the moral code than with what he believes to be theological error. It is on the assumption that the truth is easily enough ascertained if only there is the desire for it, whereas the regulation of conduct is notoriously difficult. It is a common assumption. Yet the precise contrary is the fact. Who can earnestly pursue the truth, and delve into its hidden depths, without discovering how infinitely more simple are the problems of conduct? It is there that we should be severe. Failure to reach the truth in those high realms in which theology moves should surely arouse the commiseration and not the contempt or anger of the wise. Men should be very patient with every honest seeker after truth, though in their opinion he falls far short of its attainment, since history has taught us how difficult, if sublime, is the quest on which he has embarked.

It is not strange that all Baptists do not think alike. Two strains of tradition enter into the heritage of Baptists. On the one hand they are heirs of the Protestant Reformation of Continental Europe, particularly of Germany and Luther, with its reverence for theology as a symmetrical and completed structure, its exact and rigid dogma and emphasis on orthodoxy, its sacramentalism, its substitution of the authority of the Bible, regarded as infallible and inerrant, for that of the Pope. On the other hand they are heirs of the Anabaptists, who developed their genius side by side with the Reformation, yet in large part independently of it. This is a tradition of the free life of the spirit, of the

exaltation of the inward light, of independence of form and ceremony, of social passion and democracy, freedom of conscience, and the demand for the separation of Church and State. These two influences, so dissimilar in character, so different in their demands, so difficult to harmonize, have persisted through the intervening centuries as parts of our Baptist heritage. They explain the divergences that have characterized our people in every generation. They go far to explain the doctrinal differences now existing within the denomination. There is not a phase of thought today but harks back to the days of the Reformation, and thence back to the first Christian centuries. The new theology is there together with the old. Strange how these ancients have stolen our ideas!

Thus we have the conservative of today to whom the essence of religion is doctrine, a definite, fixed, and final deposit of faith, a series of propositions arranged in a system, orderly, logical, progressive, departure from which ensures weakness and ruin. Conservatism rests upon authority, and is scrupulously careful to maintain continuity with the past. It is suspicious of change or novelty, and is reluctant to relinquish that which has proved to be fruitful in other generations. The conservative conceives himself to have completed his quest and to have arrived at truth. He is like a ship in port, whose voyage is ended, and which now, in contentment and confidence, unheeding winds and tides and currents, rides at anchor. (I refer, of course, to his intellectual or theological attitude; in practical Christian service the conservative may be, and often is, among the most active.) His anchor is an inerrant and infallible Book, of which all portions

speak with an equal authority. To him the gospel is as simple as a proposition in Euclid, and he is impatient that all do not understand it as he does and suspects that it must be due to perversity if not obliquity of will. To be a Christian is to accept as true the propositions of the gospel, and thus derive the benefits and enjoy the experience which such acceptance guarantees.

On the other hand there are those, denominate them how you will, liberals or progressives, to whom the essence of religion is not so much adherence to dogma as an attitude of mind, a spirit, purpose. For such, doctrine has its important place, but its form is not fixed or final. By such the Bible can never more be regarded as inerrant or infallible, nor are all portions of it of equal value to them. They have ceased to hope to find infallibility in anything in which fallible man has had a share. But the Bible is not the less precious to them or treasured by them on that account. Theirs is a religion of the free spirit, in large degree independent of forms or formal creeds and ordinances, an experience of God whom they believe they can reach immediately, by a sort of mystical sixth sense, called faith. They trust the inward light. They believe, with Professor Edward Caldwell Moore, that revelation is "not information, but experience." The liberal is still a seeker. He is like a ship still upon the voyage, not indifferent to the waves and the wind, nor afraid of them, but buoyed up by the one and wafted forward by the other, and rejoicing to be upon the high seas and engaged in great adventures of the soul. To him Christ is no less dear, no less Son of God, and no less Saviour and Lord than to his conservative brethren, though he may have less con-

fidence in his ability adequately to define and measure Him. Finally, he believes his conception of religion to be no less ancient and of no less honorable lineage than that of his brethren.

It is obvious that such a delineation of the position of the conservative and of the liberal will hardly describe that of most individuals who consider themselves as belonging to one or the other of the two groups. It is intended to describe the types of thought, and few individuals run true to type. There is an almost limitless series of gradations between the conservative and liberal positions, and only a few will be found at either extreme. Some like to describe themselves as liberal-conservative, and some as conservative-liberal, and some repudiate all labels as non-descriptive, while many have, perhaps, never defined their attitude even to themselves. The above is merely an attempt, perhaps unsuccessful, to determine the poles of theological thought between which men vibrate, in terms that will be acceptable as descriptive to each of the two general groups involved.

Such diverse conceptions are not easily blended. They may easily become antipathetic, the one to the other. It is foolish to attempt to minimize their divergence. But they are here among us, and here to stay. It is not likely that either will absorb the other, like another Aaron's rod turned serpent. Under such circumstances can Baptists cooperate in great kingdom tasks?

There are three conceivable possibilities in such a situation: First, there are those who say that the denomination will split apart. Since such differences in attitude and doctrinal view run in a degree through all the great denominations, and the

horizontal lines of cleavage within each are comparable in significance in our day to those perpendicular lines which divide them from one another, we may see a new alignment of denominations on other bases than those which seemed most significant to their founders. But magnify such differences as you please, the things that unite all members of the Baptist family are stronger, deeper, and firmer than those that tend to divide them. There have always been differences among Baptists: uniformity has never characterized them. But a common memory and history, a common task and common responsibilities, our democratic polity, our tradition of soul-liberty and freedom of interpretation, and a common devotion to our Master and recognition of his Lordship have sufficed to hold us together in the past and should do so still.

A second possibility is a policy of toleration. Those of differing view may learn to live and work together within the limits of a single denomination in mutual toleration and respect, like the Broad and High Church parties in the Protestant Episcopal Church, careful to avoid occasions of offense, ascribing to one another only the highest and most worthy motives conceivable, observing a scrupulous regard for one another's rights within the denomination, and seeking each, in their mutual relations, to express the spirit of Christ.

But there is a more excellent way. The thought of division is abhorrent, and toleration is an odious attitude for Christians to assume toward one another. We need not overlook or minimize our differences. May we not rejoice in them, rather, as manifestations of the presence of the living Spirit who is leading the disciples of Jesus into all the

truth? There is nothing more dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable than uniformity wherever found. Differentiation is a mark of life and progress. God has made men different from one another in order that they may help one another and supplement each other. Paul longed to see the Christians at Rome that he might bestow some spiritual gift upon them and himself receive in turn what they had to reciprocate.

The conservative needs the liberal. A subtle danger of conservatism is formalism and sacramentalism. It is tempted to put too much stress upon words and forms of statement, and easily falls into a certain intellectual hardness and rigidity. Expecting nothing new it makes few discoveries. It is, on the intellectual side, with all the evangelistic fervor which often characterizes it, static rather than dynamic. Naturally suspicious of anything that does not fit into its system, it is betrayed into antagonism to science, and is likely, in general, to be inhospitable to the spirit of the times. These are distinct limitations upon its usefulness in the surging movement of modern times. "Anchorage to a submerged rock," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "is not safe amid rising waters." Conservatism needs liberalism, its forward look, its expectancy, its hospitality to new truth, its freedom from the restraining hand of the past, its emphasis upon the spirit as against the form. If Luther had appreciated and conciliated the Anabaptists, instead of opposing them, and annexed their social passion, and assimilated their spiritual emphasis and adopted their ideal of spiritual freedom, the religious history of central Europe for the past three centuries would have been transformed.

On the other hand, the liberal needs the conservative. The danger of liberalism is a cold intellectualism, not to say rationalism. Emphasis upon "the inward light" may lead to a subjectivism which owns neither restraint nor regulation. The religion of the liberal, with its emphasis on attitude and spirit, may easily degenerate into a general feeling of good-will toward God and man, and dissolve into a warm mist of religiosity. There is a breadth that is attained at the expense of depth. "We put blinders on horses," says Doctor Parkhurst, "just so that they may not take broad views of things, but may go forward." Freedom without regulation becomes license, and religious freedom is mere spiritual dissipation unless it is interpreted as freedom within the gospel—not from the gospel. So liberalism needs conservatism to supplement and correct it. It needs conservatism to put up the fences. It needs its emphasis upon doctrine. Religion is built upon great convictions, definitely conceived and firmly held. It needs its exaltation of the Bible, for the Bible must remain the norm and standard of the Christian life. The Bible is not merely a suggestion to the free spirit of man, or a point of departure. It is the norm and corrective of the Christian's thinking. We must never get away from the Bible: we need always to return to it.

Thus conservative and liberal are essential to one another, each incomplete without the other, exercising a supplemental ministry, each contributing to the strength and poise and progress and usefulness of the denomination. Not by the exercise of toleration, but in mutual esteem, dependence, and fellowship, neither seeking to lord it over the other, they should live and work together, and share each

other's gifts. On that basis hearty cooperation is possible. Christian men do not need to agree on every doctrinal point before they can work together. It is working together that promotes understanding and harmony of view, and that incidentally reveals how comparatively insignificant are the differences that divide Christian men, and how strong and vital are the bonds that unite them. It is what we hold in common that unveils God to men and not the distinctive principles of any sect or party whatsoever. Both liberal and conservative alike acknowledge Christ as Lord, and vie with one another in fidelity to him; both see in him the only satisfaction for the world's great need, and trust for salvation to him alone. Suppose that men differ in their doctrines: they are not saved by their doctrines, but by faith in Christ alone. As Doctor Dale long ago reminded us, men are not saved by their theory of the atonement, but by the atonement. Men may be very wrong in their heads and yet right at heart. Paul could not approve the interpretation of the gospel of some who disagreed with him and opposed him, but his great soul dwelt on heights from which he could exclaim: "Notwithstanding, . . . Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!" Let us carry, therefore, the truth that we hold in common to a world that needs it, remembering that while we are disputing over the fringes of the gospel evil men in a great multitude are rending and trampling under foot the garment itself.

The problem of Baptist cooperation with Christians of other names is of much the same nature as that of cooperation within the denomination, and the solution is to be sought in the same direction.

Baptists cannot be indifferent to the question of organic union just now so widely agitated. It is a noble ideal, and makes a powerful appeal to the Christian imagination. But no basis of union has yet been presented by any responsible body which would be possible for Baptists. The foundations of a united Christendom lie deeper than ordinance or sacrament or polity or orders of the ministry, in principles that seem neglected or forgotten in the current discussion. It would clear the air if Baptists, having already said so much that is negative and obstructive upon this subject, should put forth some positive statement, as other denominations have already done, as to their position upon this vital subject, and the principles which must be observed before they could give it serious and practical consideration. We owe this to ourselves and to our Christian brethren. It may be that the cause of union waits upon the contribution which the Baptist genius may bring.

But while the discussion of organic union is still in the academic stage, and the benefits of it, on any basis, are open to grave question, the necessity of the cooperation of all evangelical denominations, if the tasks of the kingdom are to be achieved, will hardly be questioned.

The history of the Interchurch World Movement has opened anew the question of the principles which should govern interdenominational cooperation. It has lifted some facts into the foreground, raised some new questions, and provided an answer to some that have been often asked before. The partial failure of the Movement is deplorable indeed, but should not discourage or delay the attempt to devise means and methods better calculated to

attain the ends desired. The defects of the Movement, both in plan and execution, lie upon the surface. If a fraction of the acumen of the multitude of its critics, displayed after the event, had been available in the form of constructive foresight, the record might be different.

But negative results have a value as truly as positive, and it may be that the churches must explore the uncharted course of Christian cooperation by a process of trial and error. Having traversed some of the blind alleys we are ready now for the highway. Describing the method of the kingdom, Jesus declared that a "sower went forth to sow"—not a promoter to promote, a publicity man to advertise, or a financial agent to gather funds. We shall need to get back to the original, if slower and less spectacular mode of procedure, and put more confidence in the seed of the kingdom, and in the quiet processes of soul culture from which a "war psychology" distracted many, and to which the glare and noise and whirl of machinery, with which the methods of big business have bewitched the church, is inimical.

The debt which the Christian world owes to the Interchurch World Movement is, nevertheless, very great. Its remarkable achievements, too many to enumerate here, under great difficulties for which it was never wholly responsible, must not be forgotten. It has furnished a new conception of the task of the Christian church, its greatness and its character; it has given us a foretaste of the power that lies latent in American Christianity, which a spirit of unity only can release, and has revealed the nature of the difficulties and opposition with which every such movement must contend. These

are large gains. The ideal of the Movement was not too great; its estimate of the resources of a united church was not too large. It remains as a challenge to the militant forces of Protestant Christendom.

Now the way is open for a more cordial participation on the part of Baptists in some wisely conceived mode of interchurch cooperation than we have been able to offer hitherto. At the Buffalo Convention we formally registered "our conviction that the evangelical denominations of North America have and hold so many interests in common that they should in all practical ways cooperate for the promotion of their common purposes and the accomplishment of their common tasks," and reaffirmed "our earnest desire and our cordial readiness to continue and to engage in such cooperative efforts with other evangelical Protestant denominations."

Such cooperation cannot involve the surrender on the part of Baptists of their cherished convictions and distinctive principles. The surrender of conviction would be too high a price to pay even for the benefits of cooperation. Nor may the forms of cooperation be such as to forbid the continuance of our witness as individuals to those truths, long held sacred among us, which we believe to be binding upon our conscience. These are the contribution which we would fain make to Christendom at large. To speak the truth in love is a Christian privilege inextricably bound up with the possibility of Christian progress.

On the other hand, to insist upon the right to found Baptist churches everywhere, in disregard of the practise of Christian cooperation, would be to be false to principles more important than those

distinctive to ourselves, and to hinder the spread of the gospel. We are constantly affirming that neither the principles nor the practises which distinguish us from other Christian bodies are essential to salvation. We cordially admit that the essential things are the common possession of all evangelical Christians. Let us have the courage to carry that affirmation to its consistent conclusion. An adequate conception of the task of the Christian church makes it evident that Baptists cannot occupy the entire field. If the evangelization of the world depended upon Baptists, vast peoples would never hear the gospel. Some method of division of territory into spheres of influence and service, both at home and abroad, in which single denominations shall have exclusive responsibility, has long been recognized as necessary to any effective interdenominational cooperation. To refuse to accept that principle makes any large and statesmanlike plan of cooperation impossible. The world is wide. Regions destitute of all spiritual privileges abound. Some such division of responsibility must be made if the world is to be evangelized.

The cordial acceptance of that principle, however, must involve some readjustment of the present terms of admission to membership in Baptist churches. We cannot thus commit the spiritual welfare of any people to the ministry of other denominations and then disfellowship their converts by refusing to receive them into membership when they move within the sphere which has been delegated to ourselves. The character of such readjustment should be the immediate subject of the most careful consideration among us.

So also in the home field the need of some form

of community church in which, in local situations of a special character, members of more than one denomination may be gathered, is apparent. Such churches are now being organized by the score and hundred, with or without denominational sanction, in both city and country. It is widely recognized that such churches are more likely to be useful and successful if organized, not as undenominational and independent, outside the main streams of religious influence and lacking an outlet for Christian benevolence and sources of direction and inspiration, but as union churches under a denominational name and affiliations. Can Baptists form or countenance such churches? Baptists must definitely abandon such churches as they are formed, and decline to enter this field of spiritual service, or recognize such a broadening of the terms of church-membership as will make it possible for all Christians in such circumstances to be received as full or associate members of a Baptist church, even though, at entrance, they may not be convinced of the obligation of immersion. That we find no difficulty as a denomination in recognizing our open-membership brethren in England, and have absorbed into our fellowship many Free Baptist churches in our own land which have adopted this course, should help to remove all hesitation. We must accept the implications of the course to which, by the adoption by the Convention of the principle of cooperation, we are now definitely committed.

The Survey, inaugurated by the Interchurch World Movement, should be completed. We must not forfeit the opportunity which now presents itself to measure the whole task of the church in all its breadth and complexity and inspiring vastness.

In education under interdenominational direction we have already made great strides both at home and abroad. Large opportunities for expansion still invite us. There is nothing sectarian about the multiplication table or the moral code. So in hospitals, homes, and beneficent institutions of many kinds there is often economy and efficiency in interdenominational support and direction. There is no Baptist cure for typhoid, and the success of an amputation is not assured by the theological orthodoxy of the physician who performs it.

Thus the field of cooperative Christianity is opening. Without compromise of personal conviction, or sacrifice of the autonomy of the local church, can we work with one another at the great enterprises to which our denomination has been called? While true to our particular trust as Baptists, can we stand shoulder to shoulder with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and labor to make Christ King? These are the questions which the age is propounding. He who helps to answer them in the affirmative will be engaged in the most productive task to which he can set his hand.

# XII

# THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

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# THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

THERE are no ends of the earth. Today the entire world is one great community, and it is possible for the human race to be one great family. It is not thinkable now that one nation should live in isolation from all the rest. Alliances cannot be avoided. Thought transference defies all insulation. There are no zones which cannot be reached, and reached quickly. Men almost everywhere may live in the center of the world's thought and feel its heart-beat. There are no ends of the earth.

Bagdad, Turkestan, Stanley Falls, Archangel, Tokyo, Pekin, Honolulu, Capetown, all heard the reverberations of guns at Liége a few hours after they were fired. Through interpreters, half-naked natives in the heart of Africa learned of the invasion of France as soon as the story was told by "wireless," and they inquired seriously why the whites did not follow the custom of the Bantu tribes of making the great chiefs fight it out personally if they could not reach an agreement after one day of indecisive battles. Canoemen on the west coast of Africa knew on November 11, almost before the guns were cold in France, that the fighting had ceased.

The cataclysm in Europe affected even the ends of the earth, if those regions most remote from the centers of civilization may be styled the ends, for in one way or another all sections were called on to contribute some kind of fuel to the flames and

have felt the heat. Natives in South America sent rubber from the far interior forests, while men of the deserts of Mesopotamia eventually gave their oil wells, though unwillingly, to keep the fires burning in Europe. From the Sudan came devilish fighters to aid Britain's cause, as others came from Assam, Kashmir, Bengal, and who knows where? India alone sent more than eleven hundred thousand soldiers to the front. Bantus came up the west coast of Africa to fight under the flag of Belgium for King Albert, forgetting the " red rubber " atrocities of old King Leopold. France called her black children from Senegal and Madagascar, and on they came. China sent her battalions of laborers to work behind the lines.

Now black ships have sailed east and south from France with millions of those strange men who have been scattered all over Africa and the Orient. Those men have looked upon and lived in a world, the like of which had never been suggested before to their untutored minds. What wonderful stories they are telling around the evening fires of tens of thousands of villages and towns in those vast regions which are so little known to lovers of civilization's soft comforts that we call them the ends of the earth. Those men have carried intellectual dynamite with them back to their homes. They have learned the white man's highly developed art of fighting. They have acquired some of the white man's vices. Have they acquired his virtues? Soon villages and towns will be in process of evolution, revolution, or devolution. Regions other than Russia will seethe, in their own small or large way. What will be the effect on the so-called ends of the earth? Have those men taken back anything that

will make life better rather than worse? What did they learn from it all? It is doubtful if many of them even glimpsed that which thoughtful men of Orient and Occident are now seeing more clearly as the smoke of actual battle clears away, and if they have not seen it at the ends of the earth, they, with with the rest of the world, must be taught it by those who have discernment to perceive it.

Philosophers and statesmen as well as priests these days are saying, with varying forms of speech, that the world's convulsion, with its many lessons, reemphasizes the truth that after all the greatest forces are the moral and spiritual. Belief in the righteousness of a cause enabled men to meet superior forces. The call of righteousness made nations volunteer to suffer. They are saying too that the world cannot be permanently better until the men who make it are better; that treaties are of no value unless men can be trusted; that even leagues will fail unless there is enough altruism among the people of the world to make the individual group ready to sacrifice its own advantage for the good of humanity at large. President Wilson said long ago that there can be no lasting peace based on selfishness; that a world which would have peace must pay the price. So long as selfishness controls conduct there will be strife. A league of nations without a spirit of unselfishness among the powers would be little more than "a league of notions." It is homely philosophy, but true, that an honest horse race requires an honest human race. Carlyle stated it more elegantly, "The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." Herbert Spencer expressed the same thought when he said, "There is no political alchemy by which you can

get golden conduct out of leaden instincts." Mrs. Browning wrote:

> Ah! your Fouriers failed
> Because not poets enough to understand
> That life is from within.

And all these are but echoes of the great deliverance, "You must be born again."

Not only do thoughtful men of both the Occident and the Orient see the necessity for the renewal of man's moral nature as essential to human betterment, but many are declaring now more boldly than ever that religious faith is essential to the morality of a people. Some who see this clearly, and who perhaps are not ready themselves to pay the price, desire the people in general to be more vitally religious, in order to safeguard the strength of their nation. But their opinion is a tribute to pure religion. Nor is the philosophy on which their opinion is based hard to discover: Man must worship; man becomes like the god he worships. Observation the world around confirms such philosophy.

Plutarch was right. There never was a city or town, and there never will be, without its temple, chapel, or wayside shrine. Man must worship. "Man is incurably religious." Idols, pagodas, temples, and cathedrals testify to that most conspicuous fact in history. The scientific study of man's mind is disproving Petronius' famous words, "Fear first made the gods." Nor is proof lacking of the statement that man becomes like the god he worships. It is a law of life that the child becomes like his ideal character. Man unconsciously becomes like that to which he surrenders his life and devotes

his affection. The legend of the Great Stone Face finds abundant fulfilment in religion. If a man thinks of God as cruel, as do the fetish worshipers in the jungles of Africa, what more natural than that the worshiper should become cruel—perhaps a cannibal, or one who practises the burial-alive of widows and children with the body of a dead chief or parent? If God is thought of as immoral, what is more natural than that provision should be made in temples for the gratification of lust? If man worships a god to whom he attributes vice and trickery, the worshiper becomes vicious and tricky. But if he worships a god to whom he attributes love and mercy and justice and righteousness, the worshiper becomes loving and merciful and just and righteous. A prominent secular paper in America said recently in large print in a full-page Sunday editorial, "A man's idea of God, if he could express it, would tell you instantly the nature of the man."

Since man must worship, and since he becomes like the God he worships, he will become righteous as he learns to worship the King of Righteousness. There is apparent, therefore, the highest inspiration in such words as these, "I will set the Lord always before my face." Since these things are true, life begins nowhere and ends nowhere except in God, and it is not possible to render to men at the ends of the earth, or in its center, any other benefit that is comparable with that of a soul-satisfying revelation of the Eternal. Therefore we must hasten to take to men everywhere, who worship idols of their own making, whatever those idols may be, the Image of the Invisible God, for as men learn to bow before him their hearts are renewed, life is transformed, and the world is remade. There

is no hope for world-betterment except as men come to a better knowledge of and reverence for the Infinite.

If it be true that man's thought of God is vitally related to all real progress, how tremendous is the responsibility resting on those who profess to be, in a sense, the agents of the Almighty in the propagation of faith in him. But many are asking today if the organized religious forces are sufficient for any large part in the world reconstruction. Many are asking if the churches are not concerned first in the execution of their own plans, and if they are warranted in considering the realization of their own objectives so nearly coextensive with the establishment of Christ's reign in the hearts of men. Many are wondering whether ecclesiasticism is not obscuring the Christ. Many are asking if mental assent to certain doctrines is Christian discipleship; if a string of opinions is any more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness; if the Cross is not to be taken personally as the symbol of self-denying service as well as the center of theology; if the blood of Christ is not to be assimilated by the disciple as well as appropriated; whether Christianity was intended as a sleeping-potion or an inspiring stimulant to the disciple to sacrifice himself in the service of God and man; if love for one's neighbors is not the best proof of one's love to God; if it is not vain to call him Lord and not to do the things he says; if deed is not the most trustworthy evidence of creed; if the disciples' reproduction of the Master's life is not the most convincing proof to the world of Christ's divinity.

A few months ago we said, "This is potentially the greatest hour in the history of human relation-

ship." And so it was. We said as well, "It can be made actually the greatest hour in such relationships only as men receive power to live for ends outside of self." Alas! Alas! No such opportunity ever came to nations to serve the world disinterestedly as that which came to England and America in November, 1918. Will it ever come again? In the days when our people were making great sacrifices to save civilization they found themselves living upon a higher spiritual plane. They were consecrating themselves to a holy task, and they experienced a consequent inspiration. We are surest of God when we serve and when we suffer. Men offering their lives found themselves very conscious of the Eternal. Some of the sordid things disappeared. But what see we today? A recrudescence of selfishness. In our confusion we may well inquire, "Where can humanity find the dynamic which will insure a constant consecration and save the world from its woes?" When the great war was at its height and the outlook seemed darkest to those who fought for freedom, one of the most eminent journalists of America, Henry Watterson, said editorially in his well-known daily paper:

> Democracy is but a side issue. The paramount issue underlying the issue of democracy is the religion of Christ and him crucified; the bedrock of civilization; the source and resource of all that is worth having in the world that is, that gives promise in the world to come; not as an abstraction; not as a huddle of sects and factions; but as a mighty force and principle of being. The Word of God, delivered by the gentle Nazarene upon the hillside of Judea, sanctified by the cross of Calvary, has survived every assault. It is now arrayed upon land and sea to meet the deadliest of all assaults, Satan turned loose for one last final struggle.

The Christian forces of today profess to be laboring to give all the world the spirit of Him whose life found its highest expression on Calvary, and they teach that humanity's only hope is in that which the Cross represents. But are the churches dwelling sufficiently in the shadow of that Cross to catch its spirit and interpret it in terms of sacrificial service to the ends of the earth? Do those who bear the name of Christ habitually show the same measure of zeal and enthusiasm and absolute abandon in self-giving for the extension of Christ's kingdom everywhere that has been exhibited in recent years for a great cause? We believe that the ideals for which we thought we fought in the war find their highest fulfilment in the kingdom of Christ. But we see that the destructive processes alone are not sufficient. Constructive spiritual forces must be employed. Such forces, however, cannot be employed successfully unless humanity has spiritual help. Humanity cannot lift itself by its own boot-straps. Nor can the Christian forces furnish the assistance that is required unless they are willing to devote themselves to disinterested service, in times of peace, with the same self-denial which characterized nations when the world was afire.

An educated Japanese, in his own land, once said to the writer, "We do not worship our emperor as you people of the West understand the word worship, but we do have such reverence for him that we are willing to die for him at any minute." A moment later he added: "If the people who call themselves Christians had the same reverence for their Emperor, they would take the world; and they ought to have it, too." It is clear that Christian

forces are challenged today to prove their power, not by their own claims and professions of spiritual superiority or ecclesiastical priority and regularity, but by ministering to the world's deepest needs, even at the ends of the earth. The churches must meet this challenge or be charged with the betrayal of Christ in the hour of crisis and with responsibility for crucifying their Lord afresh before the world.

In this hour when other movements are touching the ends of the earth, is the church to centralize on itself and its own parish? A Christian church must think in world-terms or be adjudged obsolete. A provincial church today cumbers the earth and misinterprets the spirit of the Saviour of humanity whose name it bears. A church must think internationally. If it has no desire to reach out to the ends of the earth (not in a sectarian crusade, but in a ministry of mercy and compassion, sharing its best blessings with all others), then God must find other forces for the execution of his plans. A disciple, a church, a denomination, if true to Christ's spirit and purpose, must live and labor for the world at large. The individual who thinks chiefly of his religion as a means to his own personal salvation beyond the grave has not really accepted the Christianity of Christ. The organization that thinks chiefly of its own growth in numbers, or indeed of its own influence for the sake of its own prestige, is a travesty on a real church. Any denomination taking pride chiefly in its past and its ecclesiastical regularity, and not seeking to lose itself in heroic effort to save the world in this tragic hour, has lost its savor and eventually will be cast upon the refuse heap. He that hath ears, let him hear what the

Spirit said unto the churches long ago and is continuing to say even today. God is calling in thunderous tones. He calls to the church, as truly as ever he called, to arise and gird itself for a mighty part in all that lies ahead. Will it respond to this imperative divine summons?

There is no aristocracy of ancestry in the kingdom of God. By its own fruits will a denomination be judged. Orthopraxy is the best evidence of orthodoxy. If Baptists hold the truth in fuller measure than others, Baptists should be better doers of the word than others. If any Baptist claims for himself a superior loyalty to Christ's commands, the world has a right to expect from him greater sacrifice for Christ's kingdom. Baptists are misunderstood. Who is responsible for the misunderstanding? Will a verbal restatement of our principles prove sufficient to lead to a better understanding of our position?

Surely Baptists have a mission in this hour and a mission to the ends of the earth. If we are true to the spirit and genius of our fathers and refuse to be trammeled with ecclesiasticism; if we stand squarely for freedom of soul, and for our historical principle, "the doctrine of the soul's competency in religion, under God," as a trusted teacher has defined it; if we assert the right of every man everywhere to think and to act for himself in matters of religion, we have a message which in this hour of democracy's triumph will be welcomed in every quarter of the globe. But do we consistently live by our own historical and peculiar principle, which appears to have been our greatest distinctive contribution? Dare we be Baptists? Can we in a spirit of genuine brotherhood recognize, gladly recognize,

that God speaks to men at the ends of the earth —to the Oriental as well as to the Occidental heart? Has the West furnished a cradle for any great religion? Surely we must stand for the acknowledgment of our fundamental principles, and for their practise, here and at the ends of the earth. We have a mission to fulfil, in common with others, in taking Christ to men everywhere. We have also a mission of our own, if we are to be true to our heritage. We must claim for all men the right to interpret Christ for themselves, whether they live in the centers or at the ends of the earth—in Orient or Occident. Here is democracy in religion, and if we cannot respect the rights and opinions of other earnest men, whatever or wherever they may be, we have not begun to see the meaning of the word that we have used so frequently in recent years.

The task at the ends of the earth has only just begun. Vast zones are yet untouched. Yet there are few doors that are not open to representatives of the Christ, and many areas are already occupied. In some regions there are strong battalions who could hold the fort although foreign representatives were withdrawn. It is evident that they have seen His star in the East and many are coming to worship him. A prominent Hindu, formerly vice-chancellor of the University of Bombay and a justice of the High Court, has said, "The ideals that lie at the heart of the gospel of Christ are slowly but surely permeating every part of Hindu society and modifying every phase of Hindu thought." The first president of the Chinese Republic, himself a Confucianist, declared that while Confucianism offers ideals, Christianity furnishes power for their realization. A prime minister of Japan declared that

the grave questions under discussion between his own country and America could never be settled through diplomacy, but only as the representatives of the two lands were willing to apply the principles of the Nazarene. Government officials in the Orient have welcomed Christian schools on account of their value in emphasizing business integrity.

In every great section of the Orient the pioneers in modern education, medicine, and surgery have been Christian missionaries. They have set examples which the Orient has often been quick to imitate. In some parts the Oriental peoples have succeeded so well in developing schools and hospitals after they were taught, at first by missionaries, that they can proceed independently of foreign assistance. Then missionaries of all classes who have taken to the ends of the earth that revelation of God found in Christ Jesus, have done much to transform life through the proclamation of the Christian message illustrated by their own daily living.

The Orient and Occident must be bound together with ties of friendship and brotherhood if world-wide peace is to prove more than a dream. For the measure of international good-will that now obtains between the East and the West the missionaries are largely responsible. They have been ambassadors of good-will and of unselfish service. Immediately upon the return of one of its editors, a distinguished publicist, from a visit to Oriental lands, one of the greatest of all American journals declared that the missionary movement had become the greatest unifying power at work among men. Lord Bryce, formerly ambassador from Great Britain to the United States, is represented by a magazine writer as declaring that " The only international influence which

has ever helped Turkey has been American teachers and missionaries." It was significant that fully half of the young men sent by Japan on its first great commission to Europe and America to study Western civilization with a view to securing patterns for the development of their own country, were trained in a small mission school. It is equally significant that of China's five representatives at the peace table in Paris at the close of the great war, three had received training in a single Christian mission school in their own land, and the fourth is one of the best-known Christian leaders in the new republic. The missionary movement at the ends of the earth is having its influence at the heart of the world and is perhaps the most influential single factor in the betterment of international relationships. It is not sectarian propaganda. It is a movement for human uplift that reaches to the very ends of the earth and is based upon the conviction that individuals and nations will be remade as they learn to worship Him whose Image is the Prince of Peace. When men everywhere worship him in sincerity and truth, peace will abide in all the earth.

Are we sufficient for such an hour? Are we ready to share with men everywhere the richest blessings we enjoy? For such a time nothing less than the Cross of Christ will suffice. If we accept it personally as the divine dynamic and lose ourselves under its spell, we shall give our prayers, our gold, our sons and daughters, ourselves, our all, to reveal Christ everywhere, by oral proclamation and every needed form of service. Our conventional standards of discipleship are inadequate. God is calling to us to join in the holiest of crusades of

service to the very ends of the earth. The hour calls for larger vision, new standards of devotion, and greater plans. Most of all, it calls for a new acceptance of the divine dynamic, the Cross of Christ. " Democracy is but a side issue."

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